ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY OF ASSAM

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R. D. Choudhury

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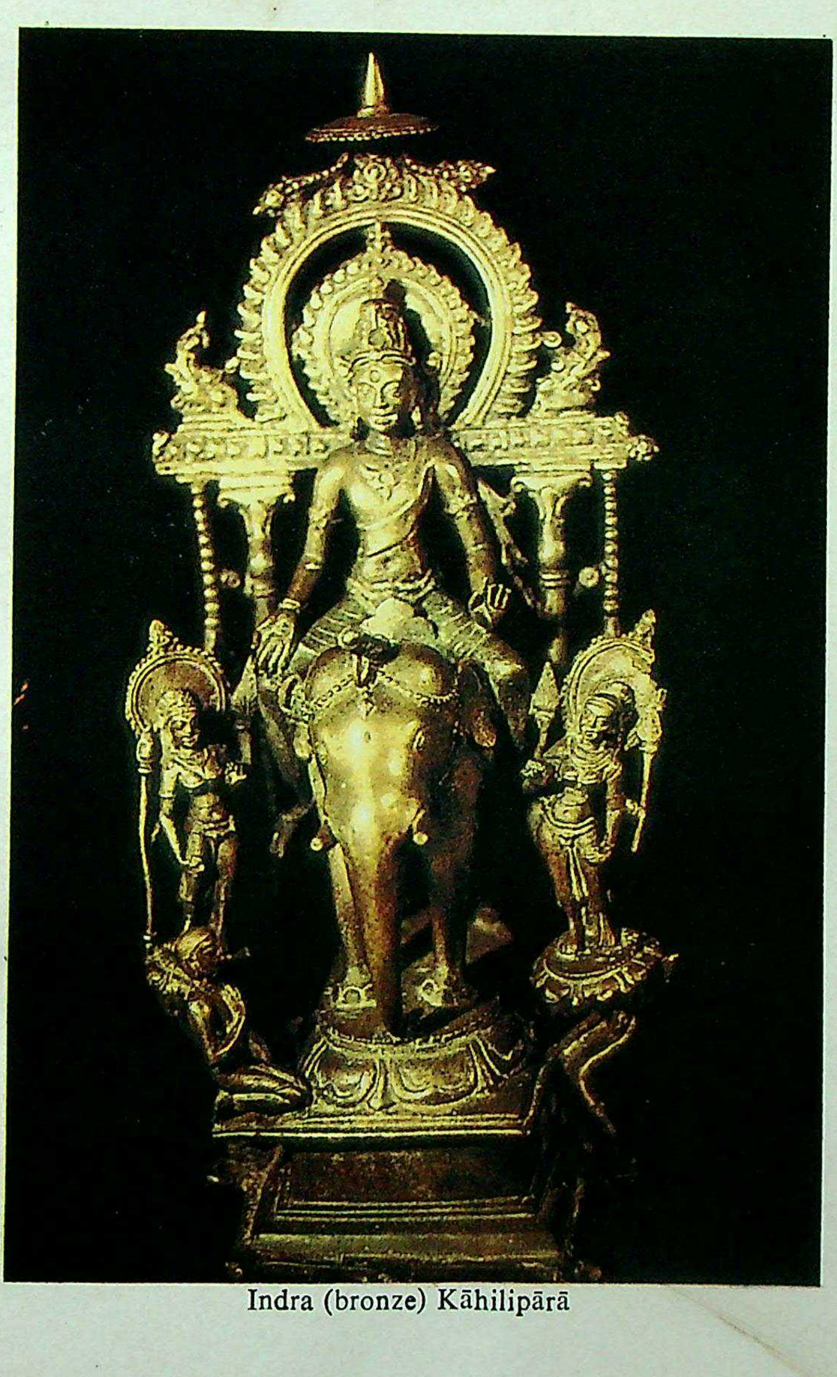
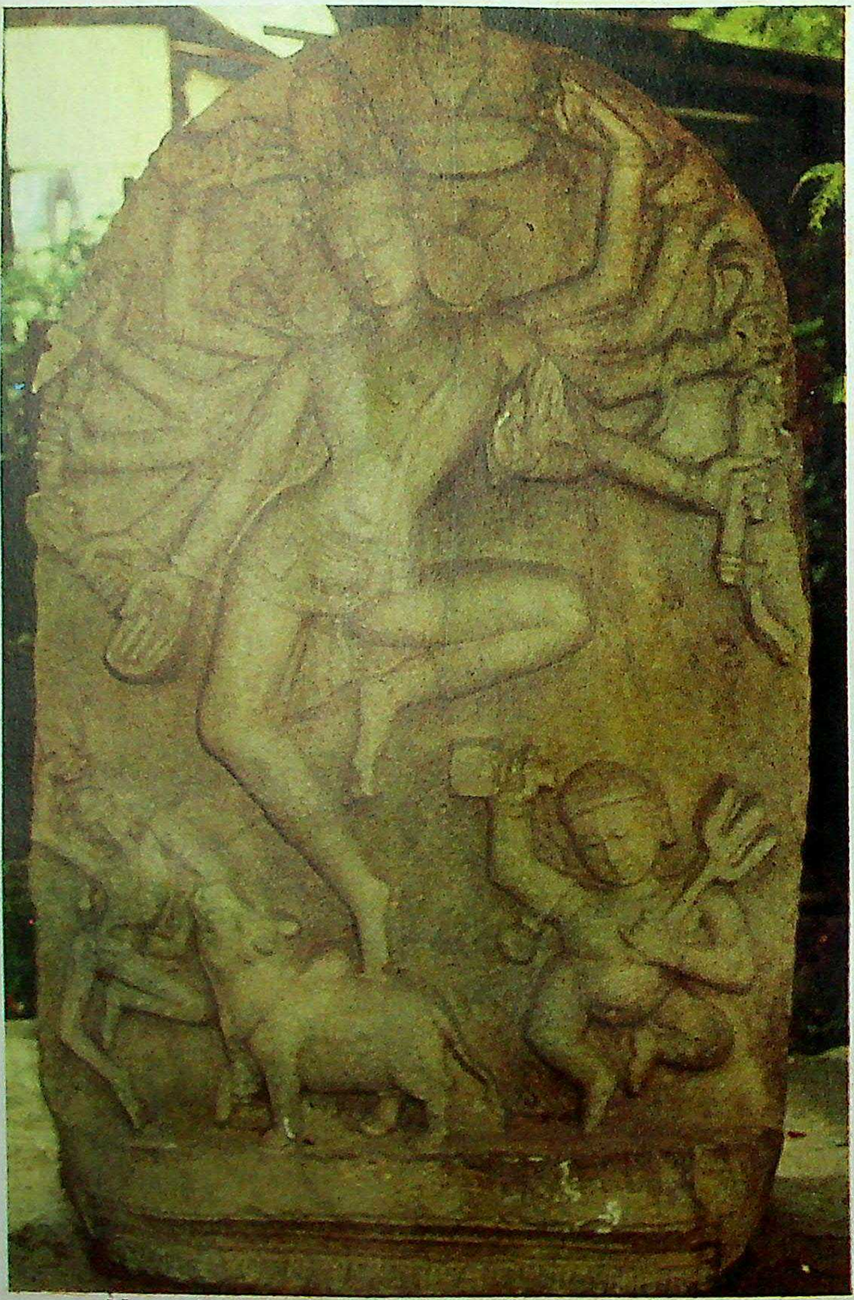


Indra (bronze) Kāhilipārā



Natarāja (Stone), C. 14th Cent., Ambari, Guwahati

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY OF ASSAM

(Pre-Ahom Period)

R. D. CHOUDHURY

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Foreword

The land of the 'Seven Sisters' occupies a significant place in the cultural history of India. Nature has showered on this land its bountiful gift of flora and fauna. Beginning from the hoary antiquity, this north-eastern part of the country has made its contribution, in variegated forms, to several cultural facets.

The two great epics, the Kālikā Purāṇa, several classical Sanskrit works and inscriptions refer to the land of Kāmarūpa and to Prāgjyotiṣhpura. The literary accounts and the rich plethora of legends have immortalised this land as a part of paradise *par excellence*.

The valley of the Brahmaputra and the Barak valley have furnished a valuable source material for the history of the land. This evidence, along with the testimony of the Chinese and other sources, has been of immense use. It has proved that the Indian culture developed in this part of the country since the proto-historic times. Welcome light has also been thrown on the inter-relations between the greater Assam and the regions of Bengal, Nepal and China.

So far only a few ancient sites in Assam have been excavated. The archaeological exploration work, conducted till now, is not adequate. With the recent opening of the new circle of the north-eastern India by the Archaeological Survey of India, it is hoped that the work will progress in the area in the right earnest.

The present work of Dr. R.D. Choudhury entitled 'Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam (Pre-Ahom period)' is a welcome addition to the previous studies concerning this area. Dr. Choudhury has utilized in this work the material obtained from his own survey work and also the evidence from other relevant sources. He has tried to make the publication up-to-date, which I hope will be utilized by future workers with profit.

K.D. BAJPAI

Sagar
4th April, 1985.

DEDICATED
TO
MY PARENTS

Preface

It has been a little more than a hundred years since Assam first attracted the attention of scholars to study its past. The era was heralded by the publication of an article in *Athenaeum* (No. 2069, June 1867 22, P. 822) on the stone age of Assam by Jhon Lubbock as far back as 1867. He was followed by some British scholar-administrators, such as, J.H. Hutton, J.P. Mills and others who made a successful investigation of the pre-historic culture of Assam. Edward Gait's study marked the beginning of the second phase of investigation into the past of Assam. In 1897 he published his *Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam*. In 1922 N.N. Basu contributed *A Social History of Assam* in three volumes. Soon after, Gait wrote *A History of Assam*. This work is monumental, but it does not give a fair idea about the history of the pre-Ahom period. In the meantime, scholars like T. Bloch, R.D. Banerji and others visited this region from time to time and published their reports in the *Annual Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India*.

With a view to unveiling the potentiality of the early History of Assam, through the Kāmarūpa Anusandhān Samity (the Assam Research Society), established in 1912, which gave birth to a journal, K.L. Barua carried on research which enabled him to write *The early history of Kāmarūpa* in 1933. The second edition of the book was published in 1966. Afterwards B.K. Barua wrote *A Cultural History of Assam* of which only the first part could be published. P.C. Choudhury went a step further with his research activities and contributed *The History of Civilization of the people of Assam from the earliest period to the 12th century A.D.* Published in 1959, this book is comprehensive and deals with both the political and cultural aspects. The second edition of the book was published in 1966.

Though many a scholar contributed valuable papers on the pre-historic culture of Assam, yet till 1960, nobody had published the results of the research in this subject in the form of a book. For the first time, A.H. Dani included it in his *Pre-history and Proto-history of Eastern India*, published in 1960. T.C. Sarma conducted an extensive study on the neolithic culture of Assam and the result of his research on this topic were submitted to the University of London in the form of a doctoral thesis in 1965. His work is undoubtedly of a pioneering nature. But it is yet to be published. He was followed by H.C. Sarma, D.K. Medhi and a few other scholars.

In the field of historical archaeology of Assam, so far no scholar carried out any research work applying modern methods till the time of taking up present study in 1966. As early as 1931, P.N. Bhattacharya edited the *Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī* in Bengali, which deals with some of the inscriptions of Assam. R.M. Nath published his *Background of Assamese culture* in 1948. In this book some sculptures of the early mediaeval period have been illustrated. But the book is not at all based on adequate research. B.K. Barua accommodated a small chapter, on fine arts in his work, while P.C. Choudhury has dealt with the archaeological remains of the State briefly in section V of chapter VI of his book. Both these scholars, so far as the archaeological sections are concerned, relied more on the published data. Moreover, their main objects were to study the cultural history and political history and not to make an extensive study on archaeology.

With a view to conducting a research on some problem of the archaeology of Assam, I approached Professor H.D. Sankalia, the then Head of the Department of Archaeology, Deccan College, Post-Graduate and Research Institute, Pune, in 1966. He readily agreed to help and guide me. At his advice, I consulted at the beginning of my research various articles, papers, books, etc. pertaining to the history, culture, religion and archaeology of Assam. Thus, examining all these past records of researches in Assam, I thought that it might be possible to work on the problem of historical archaeology of Assam and when I reported to Professor Sankalia, he suggested me the present problem.

One may ask as to why the jurisdiction of my study includes only the Brahmaputra valley and not the whole of Assam. It is known that Assam consists of both hills and plains. The hilly regions are occupied by various tribes. Though some regions of the long valley of the Brahmaputra were inhabited by some tribal people, for the advent of the Aryans or the Sanskrit-speaking people from the west in the early centuries of the Christian era, they had to move towards the foot-hills. However, a few tribes continued inhabiting here and there in the long valley. But later they became Aryanised. Even today we find in Assam mainly two cultures, viz. the Hindu culture (the Muslims came at a later period and Buddhism and Jainisim had some pockets only) in the plains of the Assam valley, watered by the Brahmaputra and the tribal culture having many branches in the hills. Therefore, temples, images sculptures, etc. belonging to the historical period are found in the plains and not in the hills. For this very fact the jurisdiction of the topic confines to the Brahmaputra valley only (Fig. I). The Kārbi Ānglong hills which are almost surrounded by the plains, definitely were under the influence of Hinduism, as some temple ruins and images of Brahmanical gods are found in this hilly district. In other words, it can be rightly said that the major part of the present study pertains to the study of the Hindu culture of old Assam.

The upper limit of the period of our enquiry has been put at early Christian centuries, while the lower limit of the same has been fixed at the end of A.D. 1200, i.e. before the rule of the Ahoms, who came from upper Burma and established their kingdom in the Brahmaputra valley.

The work was taken up in the second half of 1966 and after acquiring the knowledge of the method of exploration and acquaintance with archaeology of some other regions of India, I began my field work in Assam. The work of field study was accomplished in two successive winter seasons spending about eight months. Almost all the archaeological sites of the valley were visited and exhaustive notes along with photographs, etc. were taken at the spots.

Thus, the work is primarily based on my own field data. However, other published data from the reports of the Archaeological survey of India and other relevant literature which could be obtained, were utilised.

Compared to the other States of India, in the field of archaeology, particularly in the field of historical archaeology, Assam is not very rich. No standing monuments belonging to the pre-Ahom period exist to present day. It is because of two reasons--rains and earthquakes, all the objects of archaeological importance of the period are scattered throughout. In the present work, emphasis is laid on the images because a good number of images of the Brahmanical gods and goddesses have been found here and there. However, variety has been given more importance than the quantity of the images. As most of the images are loose it is not possible to find out their exact chronology. However, basing on the same grounds a rough choronology is found out.

In addition to the icons and sculptures, coinage, inscriptions and architectural remains have also been included in our study.

Thus, the present work is the outcome of my research conducted in the Deccan College, Post-graduate and Research Institute, Pune, during 1966-1969 and was approved by the University of Pune for the award of the Ph. D. degree in 1970.

The manuscript was given to a publisher after a few years of the award of the degree but, unfortunately, it was lying with him for some years. So, the manuscript had to be revised and made up-todate as far as possible. Meanwhile, a few books on the inscription and iconography and sculptures of Assam were published by some other scholars. M.M. Sharma published the *Inscriptions of Ancient Assam* in 1978. The *Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī* edited by D. Sarma was published in 1981. A. Bhattacharjee published *Icons and sculptures of medieval Assam* in 1978. J.P. Singh and N. Ahmed edited and published *Coinage and Economy of North Eastern States of India*, which is the proceedings of the seminar of the Numesmatic Society of India held in Shillong in 1977. T.P. Verma's *Origin and Development of Script in Ancient Kāmarūpa* was published in 1976.

The work done by M.M. Sharma is not original. All the inscriptions discovered in Assam had already been deciphered and published by various scholars. He has only given some new interpretation here and there. However, he deserves the credit for placing the Nagājari-Khanikargāon inscription (5th century A.D.) at the top of the list of the inscriptions found in Assam from the point of view of choronology. Since the earliest inscription of Assam dates back to only 500 A.D., the name of the book should have been Inscriptions of Early Assam instead of 'Ancient Assam'. Since P.N. Bhattacharya's book *Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī*, the pioneering work on the subject was published in Bengali and other deciphered and published inscriptions were lying scattered in various journals, Sharma has certainly done a work to be appreciated by compiling them in one volume and publishing the same in English. The *Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī* edited by D. Sarma is nothing but the repetition of Sarma's work. Neither it could carry any useful additional information relating to the latest discovery of the inscriptions nor its standard is maintained. Rather it has carried some misleading information to his discredit. A. Bhattacharjee's work on icons and sculptures of Assam does not have either an introduction chapter or a conclusion chapter. It is a catalogue of icons only, since he has not accommodated a chapter or section on sculpture although the name of the book is '*Icons and Sculptures of early and mediaeval Assam*'. The book has many wrong informations relating to the material of the execution of icons, identification of the sex of the icons, find place and so forth. In our review of the book, it has been discussed in details (*BASM* Vol. IV pp. 67-70). In fact, it is dangerous to relay on this type of books since it contains many wrong and misleading information.

B.N. Mukherjee's monograph '*East Indian Art Style*' was published in 1980, while B. Bandyopadhyay published his work '*Metal Sculpture of Eastern India* in 1981. In his monograph Mukherjee has accommodated a chapter on the art of Assam and an appendix on two inscribed images from Assam. The study on the art style on the images of old Assam is based on his K.L. Barua Memorial lectures delivered by the Assam State Museum, organised by the Kāmarūpa Anusandhān Samiti, Guwahati in 1978, when he came to Guwahati on invitation as State Guest to help the Assam State Museum authority for rearrangement of the coins of the Assam Provincial Coin Cabinet. Most of the photographs of the icons from Assam used by him were supplied by us. He also published some photographs in this monograph actually meant for the Comprehensive History of Assam, a scheme taken up by the Publication Board, Guwahati, which should have been properly acknowledged. The proposed book, *A Comprehensive History of Assam* of which Late Professors. K Saraswati and D.C. Sircar were one of the editors, is yet to be published. However, Mukherjee has very critically examined the pieces of art objects included by him although we have not agreed to his views in certain cases as shown in the appropriate places. Bandyopadhyay in his work has included only three bronzes from the Kāhilīpārā, (Narakāsur hill hoard) which are being preserved in the Assam State Museum. He has wrongly mentioned in all the cases as "Kahilpara" (p. 117 & Fig. 62, 63 & 64) instead of "Kāhilīpārā". In one place again he has mentioned as 'Kaklipara' (p.5). This has happened as he did not do field work and he quoted or borrowed it from some book of other scholars. He committed a glaring mistake by identifying a bronze image of Avalokiteśvara (a male figure) with Manasā (female figure, Fig. 64). This will certainly mislead the scholars. Without examining the original object it is dangerous to arrive at a conclusion by looking at some photographs.

After revision the manuscript was given to the present publisher. He sent the manuscript to the press and when some pages were printed, N.D. Choudhury's book '*Historical Archaeology of the Central Assam from Earliest period to the 12th Century*', (Ph.D. thesis) were out in the market. Again hurriedly this book had to be consulted. In fact, at the time of the preparation of Choudhury's thesis he consulted my work which was at that time in the form of an unpublished Ph.D. thesis.

It may be mentioned that the archaeological objects specially, the icons, found in the excavation at Āmbārī, Guwahati in 1969 and 1970-71 could not be included in the present work in the regular chapters as at the time of the preparation of the thesis, neither the excavation report was complete nor the excavation was completed. On the other hand, the number of images was large. Even now the excavation is not completed and the excavation report is yet to be published. However, the icons found in the excavation have been briefly noticed in the appendix. For our convenience similarly, notes on temple ruins from Madan Kāmdev Parvat and Mālinīthān and some temple ruins and old tanks have been briefly noticed in separate appendices. A few representative sculptural pieces have been included in this book. But looking at the number of sculptured stone blocks we are tempted to bring out a separate small monograph shortly on each the temple ruins at Mālinīthān, Madan Kāmdeva, icons from Āmbārī and bronzes of Kāhilīpārā, (Narakāsur hill). A monograph on sculptures from Pingaleśvar is also expected to be published jointly with Mr. C.D. Tripathi. Diacritical marks for a greater part of the work have been used. However, for anglicised and some well known names this practice is done away with.

It may be mentioned that entire North-East India including Assam remains to be properly excavated to ascertain the archaeological potentiality of the region and to throw new light on the unrevealed history and culture of the region. This was brought to the notice of the archaeologists of the country in the last annual conference of Indian Archaeological Society, held in Guwahati in the month of December 1984. The present work is an introductory study of the archaeological wealth of the Brahmaputra Valley of the period under review based on mainly exploratory plus library work.

While acknowledging the help and co-operation received by me, I must say that I am greatly indebted to Professor H.D. Sankalia, Emeritus Professor, Deccan College, Pune, for his valuable supervision in completing the work, without whose help and guidance, it would have been not possible for me to complete this work. I am also equally indebted to my beloved and respected teacher Professor K.D. Bajpai, retired Professor and Head of the Deptt. of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, University of Sagar for writing the Foreward of the book.

I have no words to express my sense of gratitude to Dr. S.P. Gupta, National Museum, New Delhi and Mr. C.D. Tripathi, Addl. Secy. U.P.S.C., New Delhi and Sh. M.C. Joshi, Director, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, without whose help and advice it would not have been possible for me to make the final revision of the book and publish it. They offered their generous help at various stages of the printing of the book. I record my sincere thanks to the Govt. of Assam for allowing me to use the photographs from the Assam State Museum. My thanks are also due to Mr. R.C. Das, Mr. Samiran Barua, Mr. Gautam Sarma, Mr. Anil Das, Miss Protiva Barua, Mr. B. Malakar and Bisvesvar Goswami and others of the Directorate of Museums, Assam, for their valuable assistance. I record the assistance I received from Mr. Khagen Das, Guwahati. Whenever I felt necessary I consulted Mr. G.N. Bhuyan, Director of Archaeology, Assam. I am grateful to him. My thanks are due to Dr. Pradip Sarma for allowing me to use the plan of the Darparvatiā temple originally drawn by him. I offer my thanks to my wife Mrs. Mandira Dev Choudhury, who took the burden of my family and helped me in completing the work. While revising the manuscript I consulted Mr. Pradip Chaliha, Guwahati at one stage who offered me his valuable suggestions. I am very thankful to him. Dr. D. Chutia Secy. Kāmarūpa Anusandhān Samiti allowed me to use two old four colour blocks of two sculpture preserved in the Assam State Museum, originally prepared in connection with '*A source book of the Archaeology of Assam and other North Eastern States*' and '*A Reading in the History and Culture of Assam*'. I acknowledge the help received from the Kāmarūpa Anusandhān Samiti in this regard. At the last but not the least I record my thanks to Dr. Agam Prasad and his staff for taking up the work of publication of the book and Mrs. Sheela Chakravarty for editing the manuscript and carefully going through the proof etc. and offering her valuable suggestions for better production of the book. Inspite of best efforts some mistakes might have crept in for which I crave the indulgence of the readers.

Guwahati
May 5,1985

RABIN DEV CHOUDHURY

Abbreviations

A.B.O.R.I.	Annals of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
A.I.	Ancient India.
A.R.E.C.	Annual Reports Eastern Circle (Archaeological Survey of India).
A.R.A.S.I.	Annual Report of Archaeological Survey of India.
A.S.S.P.	Assam Sahitya Sabha Patrika.
A.Q.	Assam Quarterly.
B.B.M.P.G.	Bulletin of the Baroda Museum Picture Gallery.
B.D.R.I.	Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute.
B.S.O.A.S.	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.
C.I.I.	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
E.I.	Epigraphia Indica.
E.W.	East and West.
I.A.	Indian Antiquary.
I.A.R.	Indian Archaeology—A Review.
I.H.Q.	Indian Historical Quarterly.
J.A.R.S.	Journal of Assam Research Society.
J.A.S.B.	Journal of Asistic Society of Bengal.
J.A.S.S.	Journal of Assam Science Society.
J.B.O.R.S.	Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society.

J.I.S.O.A.	Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art.
J.I.M.	Journal of India Museums.
J.O.I.B.	Journal of the Oriental Institute of Baroda.
J.U.H.S.	Journal of Uttar Pradesh Historical Society.
B.A.S.M.	Bulletin of Assam State Museum.
J.W.A.S.	Journal of Washington Academic Society.
K.S.	*Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī.*
M.A.S.I.	Memories of Archaeological Survey of India.
P.T.A.I.O.C.	Proceedings and Transaction of All India Oriental Conference.
A.S.M.	Assam State Museum, Guwahati.
B.O.A.S.	Bulletin of Oriental and African Studies.
Pros. N.S.I.	Proceedings of Numismatic Society of India.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A. GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Location of Assam : Assam, the easternmost State of India, lies between latitudes 28° 18' and 24° North and longitudes 90° 46' and 97° 4' East. It is bounded on the north by the sub-Himalayan ranges of Bhutan, Akā, Daflā, Miri, Ābar and Mishimī. Previously, the whole region, inhabited by the tribal people, was under the jurisdiction of Assam. Now, this region is known as Arunachal Pradesh. To the west of this region, lies the territory of Bhutan. On the east the State is bounded by the Pātkai range, which defines the western boundary of Burma, the intervening ranges being inhabited chiefly by the various tribes of Nāgās and Manipuris. The hills bordering Burma occupied by the Nāgās were previously in Assam. Now, the Nagas have their own state—Nāgāland. Towards the south of Nāgāland lies Manipur, which comprises hills and plains alike and which is a full-fledged state now. To the south lies the Mizo Hills bordering Burma and Bangladesh. To the west, just near the Mizo Hills, lies Tripura, three-fourths of which are surrounded by Bangladesh. The south-west corner of Assam is bounded by the Meghālaya State comprising Khāsi, Jaintiā and Gāro hill districts, also bordering Bangladesh. Right on the west of Assam there are no hills. The southern portion of the western boundary of Assam touches Bangladesh while the northen portion of the same is touched by the Cooch-Bihar district of West Bengal, which was a part of Assam in the past.

The middle portion of the State is a plain plateau through which the mighty Brahmaputra flows. To the south of the plains of the middle Assam, there stand the broken hills of the Assam range of the-Kārbi-Anglong. Slightly below this area, there stand the North Cāchār Hills of the same range. The Khāsi and Jaintiā Hills also can be called as broken hills of the Assam range. Cāchār was originally an independent state. It came to the hands of the British rulers in 1830 and later on it was attached to Assam as an administrative unit. As such the limits of Assam include both hills and plains (Fig. 2). At present there are only two hill districts in Assam, *viz.*, Kārbi-Ānglong Hills and the North Cāchār Hills.

The Brahmaputra and its Valley : The plain area of Assam can be divided into two valleys, i.e., the Brahmaputra Valley and the Surmā Valley, named after two principal rivers flowing along these areas. The Surmā Valley comprises the southern plains of Assam, i.e., the plains of the Cāchār district, while the Brahmaputra Valley comprises the middle portion of Assam.

The latter is much more important from the geographical and cultural point of view. Through the heart of the province runs the great river whose ancient name is *Śrī Lauhitya*. In Assamese, it is called *Lohit* or *Luit*. The present name of this river is Brahmaputra. It enters the north-eastern corner of Assam through the Mishimi Hills of Arunāchal Pradesh where it is known as the Dihong river. Having entered the political jurisdiction of Assam, this river meets the Dibong, another river flowing from the north. Yet another river comes from the east and joins these two rivers at Brahmakuṇḍa near Dibrugarh. This combined water which flows westward, is known as the river Brahmaputra. It flows through all the plain districts of Assam and crosses the boundary of Assam near the Gāro Hills. Taking a turn there to the south, it flows through Bangladesh where it meets the Ganges. In fact, it is the chief artery and high-way of Assam which carrying the water of its tributaries flows throughout the length of the State, i.e., right from Śadiyā, the easternmost town of Assam, nay of India, to the western most town of Assam—Dhubri.

The Brahmaputra Valley comprises the district of Dhubrī, Barpétā, Kāmrūp, Goālpārā, Ķokrājhār, Sonītpur. Dārrāng, Lakhmimpur, Dibrugarh, Śiva-Sāgar, Jorhāt, Nogaon, and Prāg Jyotiṣpur. It is an alluvial tract of about 450 miles in length and 50 miles in breadh lying almost east and west in its lower portion, but its upper half tending somewhat to the north-east. The valley is shut up from the north and east by the Himalayan-ranges, from the south by the Kārbi-Ānglong, Khasi and Jantiā and Gāro hills of Meghālaya. The western side of the valley is open and it joins the Ganges. In fact, this valley is the easternmost part of Indo-Gangetic plain.[1] The narrow fringe of the wall along the Cāchār district gives an easy acess to cyclones to the heart of the valley.

The total population of Assam (Area : 47,257.2 square miles), including the hill districts is 1,46,25000. The area of the plains of Assam is 24,525.2 square miles and its population is 10,557,603.[2] At present there are seventeen districts in the State : Dhubrī, Bārpetā, Kāmrūp, Goālpārā, Kokrājhār, Sonītpur, Dārrāng, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh Śivasāgar, Jorhāt, Nogaon, Prāgjyotishpur, Kārbi-Ānglong, Cāchār, North-Cāchār, Karimganja. About 60 per cent of the people of the plains belong to the Aryan stock. The tribals (mostly Bodo and rarely Garo) are occupying some areas here and there in this valley. Some parts of upper Assam are mostly occupied by the Āhoms and the Chutiās who belong to the Mongoloid stock. Physiognomically, they are different from the people of the Aryan stock. The non-tribal people, i.e. people belonging to the Aryan stock, physiognomically and culturally, are quite similar to those of other States of North India. The hills of Assam are occupied by the hill tribals who may, anthropologically, belong to Austric and non-Aryan stock. They speak their own dialects. In the plain, Assamese is the principal language.

Structure of Assam : Geologically, Assam may conveniently be divided into three regions, namely, the Extra-Peninsular region, the Indo-Gangetic plain region and the Peninsular region[3] or Assam plateau.[4] The Extra-Pennisular region is represented here by the eastern Himalayas. The Ākā, Ābar, Mishimi and the neighbouring hills are included in this region. The Brahmaputra Valley is included in the Indo-Gangetic alluvium. The Peninsular region or the Assam Plateau is formed by the ancient rock types. This region may also be termed as the Central Range and it includes the Gāro Hills, Khāsi and Jaintā, North-Cāchār Hills and Kārbi-Ānglong Hills.[5]

The Peninsular region lies along the continuation of the Archaeans of Bihar, but is separated from the latter by the Gangā-Brahmaputra Valley.[6] This plateau can be divided into two parts. The eastern part of the plateau exhibits very intricate degree of squeezing as a result of which rocks are faulted and folded. The western part has undergone very little tertiary folding. The hills of the plateau are of relict type. The rivers, originating from this plateau have got comparatively lesser erosive capacity than those of the north. The Extra-Peninsular region is a zone of geosynclinal belt and comparatively less old than the former. Salient characters of the Indo-Gangetic plain is the extensive occurrence of alluvium. These extensive deposits of alluvium were brought down from the Himalayas by the river Brahmaputra and by its tributaries.

As far as the rock types are concerned, the "Assam Himalayas" or the Extra-Peninsular region has archaeans (granites and schists), dalings, buxas and gneisses.[7] The bulk of the Assam plateau is made of gneisses, and granites; "with the diversified component" the gneisses are believed to be the oldest rock type in the province.[8] "Besides gneiss (granitic in composition) sillimanite—quartz—schists, biotite—sillimanite—quartz—cordienite rocks, corundum—sillimanite—schists, pyroxene—horn blende—granulite, hybrid rocks, etc. are here included within the gneissic group of Archaean complex."[9]

Routes : Assam is linked with the rest of India only by her western boundary.

Evidently the cultural stream flows from the north of Central India to Assam through Bengal. The Ganges and the Brahmaputra played the main role in maintaining trade and commerce between Assam and the rest of India in the past. Till recently up to the date of partition of India and Pakistan, East Bengal (now Bangladesh) was the gate-way of Assam for cultural intercourse with India. But after the partition only a narrow margin is left in the eastern boundary of West Bengal to touch Assam. This is the route through which Assam maintains her trade and communication with the rest of the country to-day. Once the Assam-Burma routes, one over the Pātkāi Hills in the North-East, leading from Lidu-Mārgheritā road to China through the Hukawang Valley in Burma and the other through Manipur and Cāchār in the South-East or South of Assam, played important parts in the movement of the populace of those regions and in cultural exchange. Even today India has a fair route to Burma, *via* Manipur. The third route was by sea or the Bay of Bengal passing through Bengal or Burma. The fourth route was in the past through Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan.[10] At present there are some routes from the North bank of the Brahmaputra to Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan.

Prāgjyotisha **and** *Kāmarūpa* : *The Ancient Names of Assam* : Historically, the name of the State, "Assam", is of quite recent origin. The ancient names of this land are Prāgjyotisha and Kāmarūpa. "Prāgjyotisha" is older than Kāmarūpā. It is mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[11] According to the *Raghuvaṁsa*[12] of Kālidās, the Prāgjyotisa country sprawled to the east where the river Brahmaputra flows. *Prāgjyotishapura* was the capital of the kingdom of Prāgjyotisha. Both the names are identical with each other. This Prāgjyotishapura has been identified with Guwahati. However, inscriptional evidence belonging to the pre-Āhom period for this identification is lacking.

The interpretations of the meaning of the word *Prāgjyotishapura* are given variously by various scholars. Gait means to say that Prāgjyotishapura means the city of "Eastern Astrology".[13] The literal translation of the word should be the "Glory of the East" or the "Light of the East". The name of the city, it seems, had something to do with astronomy and not astrology. Gait's interpretation, therefore, seems to be wrong. K.L. Barua says, "It is significant that to the immediate East of the town of Guwahati there is a temple on the crest of a hill, known as *Citrācalā*, and this temple is dedicated to the Navagrahas or the nine planets. It is probable that this temple is the origin of the name of Prāgjyotishapura."[14] According to B. Kākati, Prāgjyotisha seems to be connected with the topographical features of the land rather than with any religious cult. He thinks that the topographical features correspond to an Austric formation like *Pagar-juh* (*jo*)-*tic* (*c*=*ch*), meaning a region of extensive high hills. Hence, Prāgjyotisha may be a case of Sanskritisation of a non-Aryan formation.[15] Whatever may be the derivative forms of the word, it is likely that in Prāgjyotishapura, identified with modern Guwahati, astronomy (*jyotirvidyā*) was practised in ancient times.

This country came to be known as Kāmarūpa probably in the early mediaeval times. It is referred to in many early mediaeval works.[16] However, inscriptional reference to *Kāmarūpa* first occurs in the Allahabad *Praśasti* of Samudragupta.[17] According to a popular legend Kāmadeva was burnt by Siva here. But Kāmadeva, by dint of his divine power again came to life (rūpa). Hence, the land came to be known as Kāmarūpa.

The present name of Kāmarūpa (Kāmrūp) is applied to a modern district only. But in the past Kāmarūpa kingdom included a part of Bihar and North Bengal also. When the country was known as Prāgjyotisha, its western limit extended up to North Bihar.[18]

The name 'Assam' was applied to this land in A.D. 13th century, when the Āhoms came to the Brahmaputra Vally. These Āhoms belonged to the Shān tribe of Mongolian origin. As regards the derivation of the name Assam, there are controversies. Some say that it is derived from the *Āhoms*. According to others, *Asam*, the Assamese name of the province, is derived from Asama meaning unequal or peerless. B. Kakati thinks that *Assam* may be a later-day Sanskritisation af an earlier form of *Āchām* meaning in Tāi undefeated.[19] Baden Powell thinks that *Assam* may be derived from Hā-com, meaning the low levelled country.[20] The Hā-com is a Bodo word. According to another interpretation of some local people, the name may be derived from *a-sama* meaning not plain. Whatever may be the derivative form of *Assam*, it seems that the present name of the State had something to do with her people or her physical features.

B. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The early history of Assam is shrouded in obscurity. Traditionally, the earlier kings of Assam belonged to non-Aryan tribes, such as, Dānavas and Asuras. Mahiraṅga Dānava is said to be the first ruler of this country. He was followed by a few Dānava rulers of whom Ghataka was the last.

Ghataka was supplanted by Narakāsura. Naraka is mentioned in both the epics.[21] According to the popular legend, Naraka was the son of Vishṇu who assumed the shape of a boar to lift up Pṛthivī, mother of Naraka. It is also said that afterwards he was brought up by Janaka, the king of Videha. Naraka grew up and defeated Ghataka of Prāgjyotisha. Thereupon Vishnū installed him as the king of Prāgjyotisha. Afterwards he became friendly with Bānāsura, whose capital was in Sonitpur, modern Tezpur, and grew irreligious. Ultimately, Naraka was killed by Vishṇu for his evil deeds, After the death of Naraka, his son Bhagadatta, who is mentioned in the Mahābhārata, and who participated in the Kurukshetra war became the king of Prāgjyotisha. After him Vajradatta came to the throne. It is not known who were the immediate successors of Vajradatta.

The Kings of the *Pushyavaraman* family : The political history of Assam begins with the foundation of the Varman dynasty. In this connection, we get most valuable data from the account of Hiuen Tsang as well as from the Nidhānpur grant,[22] the Doobi grant[23] and three clay seals of Bhāskaravarman, found at Nālandā.[24] The Nidhānpur grant contains the names of thirteen kings (and most of their queens also), all of whom belonged to the family of Pushyavarman. It is stated in the same grant that "when 3,000 years had passed after Vajradatta, Pushyavarman, the founder of the new line came to the throne of Prāgjyotisha."[25] From this it is quite evident that the people of this region of about A.D. 6th or 7th century (as A.D. 7th century is the date of the Nidhānpur inscription) did not know the date of Naraka correctly. Simply they knew those rules from the current tradition. The '3,000 years' mentioned in the epigraph is a vague term or it means a number of years.

These inscriptions are not dated, and, therefore, it becomes a problem to fix the date of Pushyavarman, the first ruler and the dates of kings of his family. However, the date of Bhāskaravarman, the last king of this line, is roughly known to us as he was contemporary of Harshavardhan. Accordingly, he is placed in the first half of A.D. 7th century. Calculating four generations to a century in the usual way, P.N. Bhattacharya has placed Pushyavarman in the middle of A.D. 4th century.[26] K.L. Barua[27] supports the view of Bhattacharya and considers Pushyavarman to be the frontier king of pillar Kāmarūpa, mentioned in the Allahabad inscription. But the assumption of the title, *Maharajadhiraja* indicates his independent status. No details of Pushyavarman was followed by Samudravarman. The Doobi grant indicates that he did not witness any political chaos. The assumption of the title of *Maharajadhiraja* suggests that like his father he ruled as an independent king. He was followed by Balavarman. Like his predecessors, Balavarman also assumed the title of *Maharajadhiraja* . But this Balavarman cannot be identified with the one mentioned in the Allahabad pillar inscription, as is well examined by P.C. Choudhury.[28]

Kalyānavarman was the son and successor of Balavarman. He was succeeded by Gaṇapativarman, who was followed by his son Mahendravarman. He preformed two horse-sacrifices. It appears that he was the first among this line of kings to celebrate horse-sacrifices, which undoubtedly indicates some political victory. Mahendra was followed by his son Nārāyanavarman, who does not appear to have been much renowned like Kalyānavarman and Gaṇapativarman.

The next ruler is Mahābhūtivarman, the son and successor of Nārāyanavarman. He is named as Bhūtivarman in the *Harsha-carita* of Bāṇabhatta, which mentions some of the names af the rulers of ancient Assam. The Nidhanpur copper-plate grant was originally issued by this king. But when these were burnt, Bhāskara re-issued them.

The Baḍagaṇgā rock inscription of this king informs us that he performed a horse sacrifice, but to celebrate what political gain he performed this sacrifice is not mentioned. This inscription is dated to 234 Gupta Era (G.E.), corresponding to A.D. 554 This inscription is of great importance, as it offers some clue to the king. Bhattasali[29] has placed Bhūtivarman roughly in between A.D. 520 and A.D. 560. Both of his inscriptions bear witness to the new vigour that was added to the kingdom. He might have contested with the late Guptas and extended his sway to Bengal, as K.L. Barua[30] thinks.

After Bhūtivarman, his son Chandramukhavarman came to the throne. Chandramukhavarman was followed by his son Sthitavarman, who was, probably, installed a king during the life time of his father. It may be suggested that Chandramukha's easy going career was responsible for the disorder in the kingdom, which was set right by the strong hand of Sthitavarman. Bhattasali has rightly remarked, "The performance of two horse-sacrifices by Mahendra, one by Bhūtivarman and two others by Sthitavarman indicates the growing prosperity of the ruling family of Kāmarūpa."[31]

After Sthitavarman, his son Susthitavarman, who was also called Susthiravarman and Mṛgāṇka, became the king of Kāmarūpa. This king was defeated by Mahāsenagupta, a later powerful Gupta king. As a result, Mahāsenagupta gained the whole of Puṇdravardhan from the Kāmarūpa king and the western boundary of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa was pushed back to the river Tistā or Trisvota. The incident is mentioned in the Āphsād inscription of Ādityasena.[32]

Susthitavarman had two sons, namely, Supratishṭhitavarman and Bhāskaravarman. Supratishṭhita probably reigned for a few years. These two brothers, immediatly after the death of their father had to fight with a mighty invading army of the Gauḍas, as is evident from the Doobi grant. P.D. Choudhury observes that this invading army probably belonged to Mahāsenagupta.[33] Supratishṭhitavarman died a premature death. He was succeeded by his younger brother Bhāskaravarman, the most illustrious king of Kāmarūpa.

The most memorable event in the career of Kumāra-Bhāskarvaraman was his alliance with Harshavardhana. The life and career of this king is known from the *Harsha-carita*, the account of Hiuen Tsang who visited the kingdom of Harsha and Bhāskara, and from some inscriptions. Bhāskara made an alliance with Harsha, when the latter marched to take revenge of Śaśāṅka, the ruler of Gauḍa, who had treacherously murdered his brother. The joint army of Bhāskara and Harsha might have been a blow to Śaśāṅka. But, unfortunately, there is no concrete evidence to show that Harsha succeeded in conquering Gauḍa during the life time of Śaśāṅka. Scholars have different views regarding this incident.

When Hiuen Tsang was at the Nālandā monastery for the second time, two requests came from Bhāskara to Śilabhadra to send the Chinese pilgrim to Kāmarūpa. By that time Harsha was busy with the conquest of Korigoda. At the request of the king of Kāmarūpa, Hiuen Tsang went to Kāmarūpa. Meanwhile, Harsha came back to the capital and came to know that the great master was in Kāmarūpa. He then immediately despatched a message to Bāskara to send back the pilgrim. Thereupon, Bhāskara himself accompanied the pilgrim and both of them proceeded towards the west. Harsha received them courteously at *Kio-shu-ho-kio-lu* (Kajurgira, near modern Rājmahal).[34]

Bhāskara was not a subordinate ally of Harsha. That Harsha treated this king of Kāmarūpa as his equal, is evident from the reception given to Bhāskara by Harsha at the Kanauj and Prayāga assemblies. The reasons for treating him as equal may be that Kumāra Bhāskara offered his help to Harsha to defeat Śaśāṅka and that Bhāskara invited the Buddhist pilgrim to visit his kingdom, which shows his sincere respect for the Law of the Buddha, though Bhāskara was not a Buddhist.

Bhāskara was well educated in the śāstras. The very fact of Bhāskara's inviting the Chinese pilgrim to his court is itself a proof of his love for learning. This also proves that though he was a devout Śaiva, yet he was tolerant of all other faiths.

Bhāskara outlived Harṣha (A.D. 606—A.D. 647) by a few years. He can be placed with certainty between 600 A.D. and 650 A D.[35]

Immediately after the demise of Harsha, his minister Arjuna usurped his throne. At the same time, the Emperor of China sent a mission to India. The usurper humiliated and punished some of the members of the mission. Thereupon, some of the members fled to Nepal and sought the help of the king there. They got the help from Bhāskara also. With the joint forces they became successful in defeating Arjuna's force and took him to China as a prisoner. Soon after this event Bhāskara expired.

Bhāskara probably did not marry and so he was popularly known as Kumāra-rājā or Kumāra-Bhāskara. This inference is further strengthened by the fact that after the demise of Bhāskara, the line of Pushyavarman became extinct.

The epithet, "King of Eastern India", may have been applied by the Chinese sources owing to the fact that Bhāskara's kingdom included the whole of modern Assam, a large portion of Bengal and some portion of Bihar or at least a part of Mithilā bounded on the west by the river Kośi.

The Kings of the *Sālastambha* family : It appears that after the demise of Bhāskara there prevailed an anarchy in the kingdom in the absence of a king on the throne of Kāmarūpa for at least a few years. Afterwards Śālastambha came to the throne. Like the genealogy of the Varman kings, the geneology of the kings of the family of Śālastambha is also known from some inscriptions. In all fourteen kings of this dynasty ruled over Kāmārūpa. But very little of the careers and achievements of these rulers are known as is known of the Varman dynasty.

Considering the authenticity of the record, Śalastambha can be placed in the second half of A.D. 7th century.[36] Sālastambha, probably transferred the capital from Prāgjyotishapura to Hāruppeśvara, modern Tezpur, on his succession owing to some sort of infamy or other surrounding question of his descent. K.L. Barua thinks that he ascended the throne in about A.D. 655.[37]

Śalastambha was succeeded by his son Vijaya. The immediate successor of Vijaya was Pālaka, who was followed by Kumāra. After Kumara Vajradeva (Vajradatta ?) came to the throne. It appears that from Śalastambha to Vajradevo, all the followers of Bhāskaravarman held undisputed possession of the territories which were acquired by Bhāskara.

After Vajradeva, Harshavarman came to the throne of Kāmarūpa. Harshavarman made some conquests towards the south and the west and extended the limits of his own territory. He was, however, not allowed to remain as the lord of this vast land by Yaśovarman of Kanauj, who defeated and killed Harsha in a decisive battle fought probably not prior to A.D. 748. This was the year in which the Paśupati inscription[38] of Jayadeva, a king of Nepal, to whom Rājyamatī, the daughter of Harshavarman was given in marriage, was recorded.

Harshavarman was followed by his son Balavarman II. Next we find the name of Cakra and Arathi in the genealogical list, but they did not rule. Then came to the throne Prālambha, the son of Arathi. After Prālambha the throne of Kāmarūpa was occupied by Harjjaravarmae who is said to be a powerful ruler. But nothing is known about his career and achievements. His Tezpur rock-cut inscription dated 510 G.E. (A.D. 829) is an important record for fixing the dates of the other rulers. The "Hajjarapukhurī", a big tank, near Tezpur, excavated by him, still commemorates the king. After this king, his son Vanamālavarman came to the throne. He extended the kingdom as far as the lines of forest near the sea-shore. His capital, modern Tezpur was beautifully decorated.

In the last part of the life of Vanamāla, the throne was abdicated by him in favour of his son, Jayamāla. Jayamāla's second name was probably Vīrabāhu. He was probably contemporary of Dāvapāla, the Pāla king of Bengal. Jayamāla, like his father, abdicated the throne in favour of his son Bālavarman III. No account is available of the successors of Bālavarman III. There is a long gap of about 100 years between Bālavarman and Tyāgasiṁha, the last king of the Śālastambha dynasty.

It appears that even after Bhāskarvarman, at least the eastern part of Magadha perhaps with the whole of modern Bengal, excepting Samatata, was under the Kāmarūpa kings. This supermacy lasted about 100 years till the overthrow of Harṣavarman (about A.D. 750). Vanamāla made some conquests and extended his sway to the parts of South Bengal including Sylhet, Tripura and Mymensingh and Puṇḍravardhana in North-Bengal. It seems, his successors Jayamāla and Bālavarman could not retain those territories. But Balavarman must have made fresh conquests in North Bengal.

The Kings of the family of *Brahmapāla* : The family of Śālastambha became extinct after the death of Tyāgasiṁha. So Brahmapāla, who belonged to a collateral line of the same family as that of his predecessors, both tracing their descent from Naraka, was selected by the subjects as the king of Kāmarūpa, according to the Baḍagāon inscription.[39] It seems that during Brahmapāla's reign, Kāmarūpa was attacked by Jātavarman, son of Vajravarman of the then Varman dynasty of Eastern Magadha, when thc Pāla power began to wane.[40] It is not known how long Brahmapāla ruled but it appears that when Ratnapāla grew up, Brahmapāla abdicated in his favour.

Ratnāpala, son of Brahmapāla, ascending the throne, fortified the capital Durjayā. It is not clear whether he or his father shifted the capital from Hārūppeśvara to Śri Durjayā, identifiable with north-Guwahati (?). Ratnapāla ruled for a long time. His title *Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭaraka Maharajadhiraja*, proves that he was more powerful than his father, whose title was *Maharajadhiraja*.

Ratnapāla had a son, named Purandarapalā. It seems, Purandara died as Yuvarāja and did not rule. Therefore, Indrapalā, the son of Ratanpāla, next came to the throne. Like Ratnapāla, Indrapāla also ruled for a long time. Indrapāla was succeeded by his son Gopāla. Gopāla was followed by Harshapāla on the throne. Then came to the throne of Kāmarūpa, Dharmapāla, the son of Harshapāla. It appears that Dharmapāla ruled for a long time. He was succeeded by his son Jayapāla, who was the last king of the dynasty. No details of these kings ruled in due order of succession. King Jayapāla was overthrown by Rāmapāla, a Pāla ruler of Bengal. The Pāla rulers of Assam were not related to the Pāla rulers of Bengal. The rulers of the Brahmapāla family of Assam were different from those of the Gopāla family of Bengal.

These rulers fought several battles with the compeers of Bengal for supremacy. Sometimes the rulers of Kāmarūpa and sometimes those of Bengal were defeated. But upto the time of Dharmapāla, it is evident from the inscriptions, the rulers of Kāmarūpa could maintain their supremacy over North Bengal.

The information regarding the rule of the Pālas in Kamarūpa was gathered from a few inscriptions of Brahmapāla. Now we have a valuable copper-plate inscription found at Gāchtal, which throws some new light on the history of the kings of dynasty. D.C. Sircar says that on the basis of the palaeography of the inscription of Ratnapāla, Indrapāla and Dharmpāla, Brahmapāla was assigned to the close of A.D. 10th century and Dharmapāla to the biginning of A.D. 12th century while the reigning periods of the four intermediate kings, *viz*.. Ratnapāla, Indrapāla and Gopāla and Harshapāla were placed in the 11th century.[41] The newly discovered Gāchtal copper-plates of Gopāla. as Sircar says, inform us firstly, that Indrapāla's history is apparently of the Deccan. Secondly, Ratnapāla defeated king Rājyapāla, a Gauḍa ruler. Thirdly, Kalyānachandra, son of Srīchandra, the king of Vaṅga, met Indrapāla in the battle-field. Lastly, Gopāla had his capital in the city of Haḍappakā. These are all pieces of new information, which shows that the chronology of the kings of Brahmapāla's line, so long accepted has to be discarded in that light.[42]

As the dates of the Pāla and Gauḍa rulers, contemporaneous with the Pāla rulers of Kāmarūpa, are known, it is easy to know at least the approximate period of the rule of our kings also. In this way Sircar, says that Ratnapāla did not rule in the first half of the 11th century, but more than half a century earlier. In the same way we thinks that Indrapāla did not rule about the the middle of the 11th century, but more than half a century earlier. Likewise, the new inscription throws fresh light on the history and chronology of the Brahmapāla line of kings whose dates are to be pushed upwards now. Another kind of information of great importance is that Gopāla of Kāmarupa had his capital city of Haḍappaka, which was doubtlessly no other city but Haḍappeśvara, the capital of the Sālastambha line of kings,[43] identified as modern Tezpur on the picturesque Brahmaputra.

Reign of *Tiṅgyadeva* and others : After the conquest of Kāmarūpa, Rāmapāla set up a vassal king, Tiṅgyadeva by name, on the throne of Kāmarūpa. But soon after Tiṅgyadeva rebelled agaisnt the lord of Gauḍa, Kumārapāla, the son and successor of Rāmapāla. But Kumārpāla did easily defeat him. Afterwards Vaidyadeva, the minister of Kumārapāla, was entrusted with the administration of Kāmarūpa. Vaidyadeva also did not remain long as a feudatory of the Pālas of Bengal. For, within a short time, possibly, after the death of Kumārapāla, he declared independence and established a Brāhmana kingdom in Kāmarūpa. He probably ruled till A.D. 1150.[44] It is not known who succeded Vaidyadeva.

The Assam plates of Vallabhadeva,[45] dated 1107 Śaka era corresponding to A.D. 1185, refers to a new line of kings. Here the genealogy of Vallabhadeva is traced from Bhāskara, whom Bhattasali wants to identify with Bhāskaravarman.[46] The names of the kings, given in this epigraph, are Rāyāı ideva, Udayakarna and Vallabhadeva. There is a controversy among the scholars regarding the identification of these kings. It appears that they were immediate successors of Vaidyadeva or probably his successor, Buddhadeva. Probably either at the hands of Vallabhadeva or his successor Bakhtiyār was defeated in A.D. 1202.

Gācthal inscription, dated A.D. 1227, mentions the name of king Sundaradeva but no further details about him are available.

Sultan Giyāsuddin Iwaj led an expedition into *Kāmarūpa* and *Baning* in A.D. 1226. The next Muhammedan invasion was that of Ikhtiyar Uddin Yuzbek Tughril Khan of about A D. 1257. Soon after these invasions, the old kingdom of Kāmarūpa seems to have split up into small principalities. By the beginning of A.D. 13th century the Āhom entered Assam through her eastern boundary and founded their dynasty.

The first Āhom king was Sukāphā, who came to Assam in A.D. 1228. He introduced the Āhom rule in the Brahmaputra Valley. He was followed by a number of rulers. The last king was Purandar Sinha, whose rule was ended by 1819 in all. The Āhom ruled in Assam for about six centuries. Soon after, Assam came into the hands of the British Government. During the rule of the Āhoms many a times the

Muslims from the west attacked Assam. But they failed to occupy any part of the State. The terror caused by the Māns from Burma to the Assamese people during the last phase of the Āhom rule is one of most dreadful events in the history of Assam. When the Āhoms were ruling in upper Assam, in some parts of the hills and plains of Assam, powerful Koch, Jaintiā, Kachāri and Chutiā rulers were ruling. The entire lower Assam including North Bengal was under the Koch kings.

The stronghold of the Āhom was in upper Assam. In the lower Assam, a separate kingdom, the present Kamatā by name, was formed. This kingdom included only Kāmrūp and Goālpāra districts of Assam and the Cooch-Bihar district of Bengal. Ultimately, in the 19th century, it also fell in British hand.

C. CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF ASSAM

The earliest settlers in the eastern most region of India were the palaeolithic people. Since the last few years the Department of Anthropology, Guwahati University, has been conducting researches in some of the sites in the Garo Hills in the Meghalaya State, previously a district of Assam. The scholars who are investigating the sites are of the opinion that the tools, discovered there have affinity with those of the palaeolithic period found in some locations in South-East Asia, besides its similarity with other Indian palaeolithic cultures. This had led them to think that this culture probably migrated to South-East Asia[47] from this region. However, they feel that further researches in this field will uncover the fact. Stone-age sites have also been located in Manipur recently.[48]

Until the discovery of the implements of the palaeolithic culture, it had been held that the Neolithic people were the earliest settlers in this region. Stone tools of this period have been reported for many years from several sites, both in hills and plains. At first, some British administrators carried out researches on it and discovered many polished stone tools. Later on, the Department of Anthropology, Guwahati University, conducted systematic exploration and excavation in a number of sites near Goālpāra, North-Cāchār hills, Kārbi-Ānglong hills, and Gāro hills.[49] Amongst the sites mention may be made of Deojāli Hāding in North-Cāchār hill and Selbalgāri and Rongrāmpur in Gāro hills which have yielded numerous stone tools of the period in question. This distribution of the neolithic site proves that the settlement of these people were mainly confined to the hills.[50]

It is not known if the people of the chalcolithic period inhabited in Assam. Because, in the first place, no proper Archaeological excavation has been conducted in this region, and in the second place, we have not found any trace of such culture from any other source.

Assam, in her earliest period of civilization, witnessed the movement of the people of various strain.[51] Linguistic evidence, popular customs and some of the place names of the province indicate that speakers of the Indo-Chinese language of Mon-Khemer family which has been characterised by Schimdt as the Austric family of languages[52] came to Assam in a fairly early period. Though it is not possible to say exactly in which period they filtered into Assam, yet it appears that they penetrated into this province long before the advent of the Aryan or the people belonging to the Aryan stock from the West.[53]

The next wave of Indo-Chinese invasion is represented by the various peoples speaking Tibeto-Burman languages. After reaching the Brahmaputra Valley they were divided into several groups and occupied the different hills of the State. It seems, they failed to occupy the Khāsi and Jaintia hills and it remained under the occupation of the Austric-speaking people. The most important group of the tribes of the Tibeto-Burman people was represented by the Boḍos. They mainly occupied the plains of Assam. The Boḍos, who are also known as the Kāchārıs or the plain tribals of Assam, built strong kingdoms with varying successes and held sway over one or the other part of the province during historical times. There are some places and rivers in Assam whose names originated from the Boḍo language.

When and how the Aryans entered Assam from the West is not quite clear. But it seems that they came comparatively at a late period.[54]

The Vedic literature speaks of Eastern India as a *Malccha* country.[55] The *Mahabharata* refers to it as a *Mleccha* kingdom, which was ruled over by king Bhagadatta. In the same work it is referred to also as an *Asura* kingdom ruled over by the *Asuras*, i.e., Narakāsura and others.[56] This shows that the Aryans did not come to Assam at an early period, and that during the Vedic and Epic periods this region was ruled by the *Asuras*, who were non-Aryan and the predecessors of the of the Aryans. Ray Choudhury[57] while giving the description of the kingdom of Kōśala in the age of the great *Janaka*, says that the river *Sadanīra* (in Bihar) was, for a time, the limit of the Aryan world in that direction and beyond it was a marshy region, not frequented by the Brāhmaṇas. Majumdar[58] says that gradully an increasing number of high-class Aryans poured into Bengal from the middle of India in the early centuries of the Christian era, either in the wake of military campaigns or for more peaceful pursuits.

All this shows that the Aryan migration to Assam took place at a later period and before that Assam was dominated by the *Asuras*, i.e., non-Aryans. Now let us see who these *Asuras* were. Banerji-Shastri has contributed two exhaustive papers on the *Asuras*, who are referred to in the Vedic and the Brāhmanical literature.[59] He has shown that these *Asuras* migrated from Assyria to India earlier than the Aryans. They first established themselves in the Indus Valley. Subsequently, the Aryans came and fought with them. The Asuras were defeated and pushed downwards. As a result, they came down to *Madhyadeśa* and made a stronghold there. But, afterwards, they were again beaten up by the Aryans. Ultimately, some of them had to go further to the East, i.e., Bengal and Assam, while the others entered South India (?).

The author further remarks that "Jarāsandha at Rājgir and Bhagadatta in Prāgjyotiṣa attest *Asura* individuality through Epic days and later" and that the closing point in the history of indidual *Asura* chief centres round Bhagadatta of Assam and North Bengal (Prāgjyotisha) and Jarāsandha of Magadha."[60] Bhagādatta was an *Asura* king who was called Mleccha.[61] *Mleccha* is allied to *Mlech*, Malka, an Assyrian form which is still used as Mlek or Malek in Baluchistan and as Malik in the Indus Valley.[62]

With a view to finding out the real nature and content of the cultures represented by the *Asura* sites and determining their chronological position in relation to other cultures of the northern Indian plains excavation was conducted at Saradkel and Kuñjla in Bihar.[63] It is proved from both the sites that the culture represented by these so-called *Asura* sites was an iron using one and did not represent in any of its phases a completely stone or copper assemblage. It is reasonable to infer that the culture may belong to A D. 110 or 200.

Therefore, onr conjecture is that on this basis Naraka and Bhagadatta may be placed in *c.* A.D. 100 and that they and some of their predecessors, such as, Mahiraṅga, Ghaṭakāsura, etc. represented the early *Asuras* in Assam. P.C. Choudhury rightly says that Naraka and Bhagadatta might have flourished about A.D. 100.[64] These *Asuras* were none but the non-Aryan people.

After the end of the *Asura* rule in Assam, the Aryans might have started penetrating into Assam slowly. P.C. Choudhury, it seems, has rightly remarked that Bhagadatta might have come under the Aryan influence.[65] For, Bhagadatta is an Aryanised name. Moreover, Bhagadatta and his successor Vajradatta were the kings of the last phase of the *Asura* rule in Assam.

Apart from the literary evidence, we have inscriptional evidence to show that in the early centuries of Christian era, the Aryan people, who came from the west of Assam, settled in the Brahmaputra Valley. From the beginning of A.D. 6th century, it has become customary on the part of the rulers of Assam to create *agrahāra* settlement for the Brāhmaṇas and this royal policy was largely responsible for the settlement of the Brāmaṇas and some other high class Aryans (inferior to Brāhmaṇas) in the land. The system of settling the Brāhmaṇas from Bengal and other parts of India was continued right up to the Āhom period. The same practice was in vogue in Bengal where the rulers imported Brāhmaṇas from various corners of Central India in a period between A.D. 6th and A.D. 12th centuries.[66] As a result of the spread of the Aryan culture, Kāmarūpa, as shown by Yuan Chwang became a noted centre of thc Brahmanichal learning in the early mediaeval period. Thus, with the Aryanisation in Assam, Hinduism became very popular. This relationship became very prominent and it seems that even some of the petty non-Hindu tribes came to become Hindus. By this time Sanskrit became the most popular language in the plains of Assam. This language not only became the court language during the historical period but also the medium of expression for poets and thinkers. As a result, by about the 10th century the modern Assamese developed as an Aryan speech out of Sanskrit.

The regimes of the kings of Aryan affiliation were ended (by the beginning of A.D. 13th century) as soon as the Shāns also known as the Āhoms, overran and conquered Assam. They occupied the pains of upper Assam and still their decendants are inhabiting most of the portions of upper Assam.

With the settlement of the Aryan people Hinduism became popular in the land, as we have already shown. Gradually, the grip of this faith became so tight in Assam that except the people who were occupying the hills, the whole bulk of the population of Assam became Hindus. Buddhism and Jainism do not seem to have been very popular in Assam, even though they flourished in Bihar and Bengal, its neighbouring regions. The reason may be that the people of the State were strong adherents to Hinduism and that the rulers of Assam patronised Hinduism only. Moreover, the hilly tribes of Assam had their own customs and beliefs affiliated to the non-Aryan faiths. Therefore, leaving Assam aside, the propagators of Buddhism and Jainism probably advanced south-eastwards by the sea route to preach the laws of Buddha and Mahāvīra in the south-east Asiatic countries.

Among the important cults that existed in Assam were Śaiva, Vaishṇava, Śakti and Sūrya. Śaivism was popular in Assam from the early centuries of the Christian era and it became popular both among the aboriginals and Aryanised people. The numerous Śiva-liṅgas lying scattered in the ruins of the old temples belonging to the period ranging from about the 5th to the late Āhom period bear testimony to the fact that in the past this cult was very popular in Assam.

In addition to this, we get more comprehensive data pertaining to the predominance of Śaivism in this land from the epigraphs belonging to the pre-Āhom age. Prior to the king Dharmapāla (A.D. 12th century), all the rulers of Assam were devotees of Śiva. In almost all the inscriptions of these rulers invocations are made to Śiva. In the Nidhānpur grant of Bhāskaravarman, for instance, the invoking verse is: *Om praṇamya devaṁ Śaśi-śekhara-priyaṁ pinakina bhasma kaṇair-vibhūshita*"[67] and in the Doobi grant of the same ruler the verse of invocation to Śiva is : "*Praṇamya devaṁ Śaśiśekharaṁ priyaṁ piuakinam bhasmaka*....."[68] In the Khanāmukhi grant Śiva is invoked as *Ardhanarīśvara* (*Vandē tamardhayuvatisvaramadideva*).[69] That Śaivism of that period was a fully developed cult with various sub-cults can be seen from the various names of Śiva such as *Heṭuka-Śūlin* (Tezpur grant of Vanamāla). *Śambhū* (Guwahati grant of Ratnapāla), *Paramamaheśvara* (Tezpur rock inscription), *Rudra* Nogāon grant of Vanamāla) etc., mentioned in connection with the erection of some Śiva temples and invocations in the inscriptions.

Apart from the archaeological data, we have literary evidence to show the popularity of Śaivism in old Assam. This fact is mainly substantiated by the *Kalika-puraṇa*,[70] a work of about A.D. 10th century and the *Yogin-Tantra*,[71] a work of about

A.D. 16th century. Even now the cult is popular in the plains and some hilly regions of Assam.

The worship of Vishṇu was evidently prevalent in Assam from early times, as it has already been noted that the kings of Kāmarūpa traced their lineage to Vishṇu through Naraka. The Kālikā-Purāṇa refers to five sacred places in Kāmarūpa—sacred to Vishṇu.[72] Looking at the archaeological data that have come to light, it can be safely remarked that Vaishṇavism was in no way less popular than Śaivism in old Assam. Images of Vishṇu are noticed in each and every corner of the Brahmaputra Valley, as in Bengal and other parts of India. However, like most of the Vishṇu images of Bengal[73] a great majority of these images from Assam belong to a period ranging from A D. 10th to 12th century. Images of Vishṇu cult belonging to a period, prior to 8th century, are rare in Assam, as we shall show.

In addition to the iconographical data, we get epigraphic evidences to show that Vaishṇavism was a popular cult in Assam in the early mediaeval period. The earliest recorded reference to the worship of Vishṇu occurs in the Baḍagaṅgā rock inscription of Bhūtivarman (6th century), and the king is mentioned here as *Paramadaivat-Paramabhagvata.*[74] The next concrete evidence is found in the Puṣpabhadrā grant of Dharmapāla (12th century). It begins with an adoration of Varāhāvatāra of Vishṇu ; and in the record itself the donee is referred to as a Brāhmaṇa, who was "from his birth a worshipper of the lotus-like feet of *Madhava* (*yo balaytaḥ prabhṛtimadhavapadapadmapūja—prapañca-racanamsuciram cakara*).[75] Bhattacharya has rightly remarked that Dharmapāla, at the time of issuing this grant, embraced the Vaishṇava faith.[76]

Now, we see that both iconograpical and inscriptional data prove that the cult became very popular during A.D. 10th-12th centuries and the same was introduced in the land in about A.D. 6th century. Prior to A.D. 7th century in all probability, the Śaiva cult was very popular in Assam, but side by side Vaishṇava cult did exist. The extreme popularity of the cult in the 12th century was probably caused by Jayadeva, the contemporary Vaishṇava propagator of Bengal, who composed the *Gita-Govindam.*[77] The Āhoms, who came to Assam from the east in A.D. 13th century also accepted the faith, though from the time of Rudra Singha (18th century) onwards they embraced Śaktism. Still this cult is popular among the majority of the people of the Brahmaputra Valley.

Just like Śaivism and Vaishṇavism, Śaktism was also quite popular in Assam. In fact, Bengal and Assam were the home-land of Śaktism. Eliot thinks that the birthplace of Śaktism as a definite sect seems to have been eastern India.[78] H.H. Wilson, in the preface to his translation of the *Vishṇu-Puraṇa,* says that it is a singular and uninvestigated circumstance that Assam, or at least north-eastern parts of Bengal, seems to have been in a great degree the source from which Tāntrism and Śaktism proceeded. The origin and, later growth of the important elements of Tāntrism are to be attributed to the non-Aryans in ancient Assam.[79]

But strangely enough, except the images of Mahiṣamardinī and Cāmuṇḍā, images of other goddesses of this cult are rare in Assam. Images of Mahiṣamardinī are found in many places in Assam, as in Benaal, Orissa, Bihar and some other parts of India. We have also noticed a few images of Cāmuṇḍā at Kāmākhyā. These images stylistically, belong to about A.D. 11th century. It is also a matter of surprise that in the inscriptions, there is no trace of Śakti worship, except a veiled reference in the grants of Vanamāla and Indrapāla to the temples of *Kameśvara Maha-Gaurī* and *Maha-Gaurī Kameśvara*. The reason is not quite clear. B.K. Barua thinks that the silence may, however, be due to the fact that "Śaktism represents a particular phase of religion which was in the main personal and esoteric", and so this cult had no connection with any public religious order or establishment. He further says that personal in origin, its tenets and history were preserved in a special class of magic and sacramental literature, commonly known as the tantras.[80] It may also be due to that that the goddesses of this cult were worshipped by the Śāktas in aniconic or symbolic form. Even the famous Kāmākhyā temple, the principal centre of Śakti worship, does not house any image of the deity in the *garbhagṛha*. There are some other Śakti temples in Assam where the Devī is still worshipped in aniconic form.

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Traditionally, Śaktism is considered to have its centre in Kāmarūpa with its chief temple at Kāmākhyā. Another famous shrine of Śakti worship is the Tāmreśvarī temple at Ṣadiyā. However, the present Kāmākhyā temple was renovated by Naranārāyaṇa, the powerful Koch King (16th *century*), and the Tāmreśvarī temple was built in the days of the Chutiās. Evidently, they belong to later periods. There are some other Śakti temples in Assam which were either renovated or built in the days of the Koch and Āhom. However, from the ruins of the Kāmākhyā hill, it is evident that there was some old Śākta temple, and this idea is substantiated by the extant Cāmundā images at the site. The Singri temple ruins also yielded a Durgā image.

The *Kalika.Purāṇa*,[81] which mentions five sacred places to Devī in Kāmarūpa, describes many Śakti goddesses[82] and it refers to the popularity of the worship of Devī in old Assam. The existing material,—records and remains, therefore, point to the widespread prevalence of the cult.[83] Even after the Vaishṇava reformation, a great bulk of the population remained as Śāktas and the temple of Kāmākhyā is still one of the great centres of Śākta worshippers, and hundreds of animals, birds are sacrificed at the alter of the Devī in the name of religion. In the past, even human sacrifice was in vogue in Kāmākhyā and Tāmreśvarī temples.

The cult of Sūrya also existed in old Assam. The antiquity of the cult of Sūrya is indicated by the very name *Prāgjyotisha* (meaning light of the East or eastern astronomy), which finds mention in some of the early literary works, and in these nomenclatures like Navagraha and Shrī-Sūryapāhār.

In addtion to the literary evidence, we have sufficient archaeological materials to prove that once that cult was very popular in Assam, as also in Bengal.[84] Many images of Sūrya have been noticed in the State. All these images belong to a period ranging from A D. 6th to A.D. 12th century. Sūrya belonging to the Āhom period is very rare. Most of the discovered images of the god belong to A.D. 10th-12th centuries. It is probably due to the fact that some of the Sena kings of Bengal were devotes of Sūrya and possibly this caused popularity of the cult in Assam.

In Tezpur the ruins of a temple lead us to infer that originally the temple was dedicated to Sūrya. But we do not get inscriptional references to the popularity of this cult in Assam. However, in the Guwahati grant of Indrapāla occurs an expression, "*aditya-bhaṭṭaraka*", which Hoernle takes to mean Holy Āditya or Sun-god.[35]

Sūrya Pāhār, according to a local belief, was an important centre of this cult. At Navagraha, Guwahati, there is a temple dedicated to the Navagraha.[86] It is a temple of later times where the deities are worshipped in aniconic forms. There are, however, at the present time, no distinct sects revering Sūrya and bearing his name in Assam. But the essentials of his worship are present everywhere in Assam and in many sects, more or less avowedly or in disguise. The present *Magha-bihu*, which is popular in the Brahmaputra valley definitely traces its origin from the Sūrya worship in vogue in old Assam.

Besides, the major cult images of Vishṇu, Śiva, Devī and Sūrya, we have some references to other minor gods and goddesses whose ordinary representations are also found in Assam. The icons of minor gods and goddesses, such as, Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya, Indra, Kuvera, Lakshmī, Sarasvatī, Manasā, etc. belonging to the mediaeval period, are found in Assam. But we have no definite knowledge of their cults.[87]

Though numerous images of Gaṇeśa are noticed in the province, yet there is no sufficient evidence to show that Gāṇapatya was prevalent in Assam. Even today he is popular among the people of the plains of Assam as a minor deity and not as a cult deity. Now, it seems, except the worship of Gaṇeśa, Lakshmī, Sarasvatī and Manasā, the worship of other minor gods are relegated into background.

Buddhism could not get a strong foundation in Assam. Only a few images of the Buddha have been found in this land, but all of them are portable and they are evidently imported from the neighbouring regions, where the Law of the Buddha has its strong-hold. However, it is not known how and when they were imported to Assam. It is likely that some section of the people of Assam in the early mediaeval period were tempted to accept the Law of Buddha, as this was very popular in Bengal, Bihar, Nepal and Bhutan, the States bordering Assam and it may also be inferred that those few images might have been brought to Assam by some traders or some people who wanted to introduce the religion in Assam but could not do so, as the royal authorities were Hindus.

Regarding the existence of Buddhism in Assam, not a single epigraph of the early rulers give any direct hint. The expressions of 'dharma' and 'tathāgata' which occur in Bhāskaravarman's and Indrapāla's grants respectively have led some scholars like K.L. Barua[88] and others to think that Buddhism existed in Assam. P.

Bhattacharya[89] has rightly shown that the Nidhānpur grant of Bhāskravarman in which the word 'dharma' occurs was issued from Karṇasuvarṇa, the place of victory (of Bhāskara), which was in Bengal. Probably, the locality of the grant had something to do with 'Dharma'. We know from Yuan Chwang's description of Karṇasuvarṇa that the place had many Buddhist statues and temples. Bhāskara, who had become liberal in views on account of his long association with the king Harsha, who was a patron of Buddhism, tried probably to gain popularity by the insertion of a passing tribute of respect to the local creed in his inscription.[90] However, we cannot say, basing on this passing expression, that Buddhism flourished in Kāmarūpa.

In all the epigraphs of the rulers of Assam, excepting the Baḍgaṇgā inscription of Bhūtivarman, prior to Dharmapāla (A.D. 12th century), invocations are made to Śiva. But Dharmapāla at last came forward to give up the traditional tutelary deity, Śiva and to accept Vishṇu as the tutelary deity, who is invoked in the beginning of his Pushpabhadrā grant. Dharmapāla was probably influenced by Jayadeva, the propagator of Vaishṇavism in Bengal in A.D. 12th century. Therefore, if there would have been any change in the religion, it would have certainly been indicated in the inscription of the local rulers.

On the other hand, we do not find any indication as regards the existence of Buddhism in the writing of Yuan Chwang. He has mentioned that in A.D. 7th century, the people of Kāmarūpa worshipped the *devas* and did not believe in Buddhism. Again, he has remarked that hundreds of *deva* temples existed in Assam.[91] Moreover, Bhāskaravarman himself was a devotee of Śiva. Of course, it is true that Bhāskara had a deep respect for this Buddhist pilgrim and out of good feelings of his heart he invited the Master to pay a visit to Kāmarūpa.

There is a strong tradition current in Nepal and Bhutan that the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* of the Buddha took place in Kuśinära or Kuśīnagara, a town in Kāmarūpa. Waddlle[92] identified it with the modern town of Śoālkuchi, near Guwahati and in the proximity of Hājo, where the Hayagrīva Mādhava temple exists. This Śoālkuchi and also Hājo are visited by the Bhutanese, Sikimese and Tibetan Buddhists. But the identification of Waddle is quite misleading. That Buddha breathed his last at Kuśīnagara, a place in Uttar Pradesh, is an established fact, which has been accepted by all scholars. K.L. Barua rightly says that Waddle's identification is evidently wrong.[93] The Bhutanese (or Tibetan ?) tradition is based on some unauthentic information. The Bhutanese also come to visit Hājo and some of them say that Buddha died at Hājo. Similarly, some of the Buddhists from Bhutan visit Śingri regularly with the same intention, i.e., to pay homage to the Lord.

The Tibetan historian, Tārānātha, in his treatise on the history of Buddhism, compiled in 1608, refers to the fact that the people of Kāmarūpa were the worshippers of the Sun prior to the advent of the Buddhist monk, Dhītika, who came there to convert the people from Sun-worship to Buddhism. In order to persuade the

Sun-worshippers to listen to him, Dhītika started pretending that he was an envoy of Sun-god; and having attracted their attention in this way, he revealed the Buddhist gospel there.[94] In the same way, it is now clear that the people of Buhtan, Nepal and Tibet, who think that Buddha died in Kāmarūpa were misled by the Buddhist monks. Therefore, it is to be sure, that their tradition is based on some wrong information. And, in this way, the Buddhist monks tried to attract and convert the people of Assam. But they were not given recognition by the Hindus.

P.C. Choudhury has gone a step further to find evidence in some Buddhist works compiled at far off places from Assam, to make his argument strong that Buddhism did flourish in Assam.[95] G.R. Choudhury tries to prove that the Kāmākhyā temple was originally a Buddhist stūpa.[96] U.C. Talukdar[97] opines that Buddha died at Hājo. The theories of these scholars are not convincing due to lack of corroborative evidence. Therefore, on the basis of the above discussion, we can safely conclude that Buddhism was not accepted by the people of old Assam, as of to-day, and extend our support to the theories of B.K. Barua[98] and others who plead that Buddhism could not flourish in Assam. However, it seems that Dhītika or his followers, referred to above were partially successful in introducing some rituals of Tāntrik-Buddhism into Hinduism in Assam. Still we find some traces of Mahāyana Buddhism in some secret sects of Hinduism in this region.

Hinduism is the principal religion of Assam at present. The same past culture of the Aryans still exists in the Brahmaputra Valley with slight modification here and there. However, almost all the hill tribes have become Christian during the British rule. During the Moghal period, as a result of the attempts of the Muslims to invade Assam, many Muslims were left in the State. There are also Buddhist people of Mongolian origin in Assam, who migrated from upper Burma in about 16th-17th century.

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57. *Political History of Ancient India*, 1950, p. 77.
58. *History of Bengal*, Dacca, 1943, p. 564.
59. See *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. XII, pp. 243-284, and pp. 335-358.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 355.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibia.* There are some Bodos in Assam who write their surname as, 'Mech', which might be derived from *Mleccha.*
63. *I.A.R.*, 1964-65, pp. 11-12.
64. *Op. cit.*, p. 124. Kakati places Narakāsura in between 200 A.D. and 500 A.D. See *The Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, 1948, Guwahati, p. 32.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
66. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 563-65.
67. *E.I.*, Vol. XII, p. 73.
68. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. XII, p. 16.
69. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 116.
70. Barua, B.K. *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144. Also see Kakati, *The Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, Guwahati, 1948, p. 11. This authority refers to fifteen places sacred to Śiva in Kāmarūpa.
71. *Ibid.*
72. Kakati, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
73. Bhattasāli, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, p. 78.

74. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. VIII, p. 139.
75. Bhattacharya, *Kāmarūpa Sāsanāvalī*, 1338, B.S., pp. 168f.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
77. Bhattasālī, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
78. *Hinduism and Bhuddhism*, 1954, Vol. II, p. 78.
79. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, pp. 413-416.
80. Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, p. 148.
81. Hazra, R.C., *Studies in the Upa-purānas*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1958, pp. 194-258; also Gode, P.K., *The Date of the Kālikā-Purāna*, *J.O.R.*, Vol. V, pp. 289-294. *Kakati*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
82. *Gode, P.K., Comm. Vol.*, Poona, 1960, pp. 1-18.
83. Eliot, *op. cit.*, pp 288-90.
84. Bhattasālī, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
85. *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. LXVI, pp. 113-32.
86. Chutia, D., *Some Observations on the Aniconic Symbols of the Navagraha Temple at Guwahati*, *J.A.R.S.*, Vol, XVIII, pp. 98-106.
87. Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, p. 153; and Choudhury, *op. cit.*, pp. 427-428.
88. *Op. cit.*, p. 97.
89. *E.I.*, Vol. XII, p. 70.
90. The word '*tathāgata*', mentioned in the Guwahati grant of Indrapāla, leads N. N. Das Gupta to infer the existence of a *Sūrya* temple. See *I.H.Q.*, Vol. XXVI, p. 33f. The same word occurs also in the Puṣpabhadrā grant of Dharmapāla.
91. Watters, *On Yūan Chwang's Travels in India*, London, 1904, Vol. II, p. 186f.
92. *Buddhism of Tibet*, London, 1895, pp. 307f.
93. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. II, pp. 39f.
94. Schienfner, *Taranathe de Doctrinae Buddhicae in India Propagattione*, p. 24; also Barua, B. K., *op. cit.*, p. 155.
95. *Op. cit.*, pp. 399-406.
96. *Sculptural Representation of the life of Buddha on the Buddhist Monuments at Nilāchal Hill*, Guwahati, 1964.
97. *The Place of Mahāparinirvāna of Gautama Buddha.*
98. Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, p. 161.

Chapter 2

Iconography

Majority of the extant icons of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam belong to the Brahmanic faith. Only a few images of Buddhist pantheon and only two Jaina icons have been noticed in Assam, so far. The extant images belonging to the pre-Āhom period are loose. With the exception of the images at Dāparvatiā and two rock-cut images, all are found lying scattered here and there.

In Assam stone was the common material for making images. In the period between A.D. 6th and 10th centuries mostly granite and, rarely, sandstone were used for the purpose. However, the use of basalt was also known at that time. But from the 10th century onwards basalt was used exhaustively for making images. The use of metal for making images was probably well known in Assam. Few metal images have already been found, to this date. Terracotta sculptures representing deities belonging to this period are very few in number.

In the following pages the icons will be described under the following headings :

I. *Vaishṇava images*
II. *Sūrya images*
III. *Śaiva images*
IV. *Śakti images*
V. *Miscellaneous images.*

I. *Vaishṇava Images*

VISHṆU : Two varieties of Vishṇumūrti, i.e., (1) *Sthānaka* (standing), and (2) *Asana* (sitting), belonging to the pre-Āhom period are noticed in Assam. However, the number of the *Sthānaka-mūrti* of the deity is more in Assam, as in other parts of India. Ā*sana-mūrtis* of the deity are quite few in number. *Śayana-mūrti* of the diety belonging to the period in question is not at all noticed in Assam.

There are many texts where the icons of Vishṇu are described. They are the *Mahābhārata*,[1] the *Bṛhat-saṁhitā*,[2] the *Matsyapurāṇa*,[3] the *Vaikhānasāgama*,[4] the *Vishṇudharmottara*,[5] the *Narasiṁha-purāṇa*,[6] the *Kālikā-purāṇa*,[6a] and so forth.

(1) *Sthānaka variety* : An image of Vishṇu, carved from a block of basalt, is noticed in the Assam State Museum at Guwahati. It was found at Deopānī, near Golāghāt (frontispiece) and measures 77 cms x 41 cms. The image is in *samapādasthānaka* attitude. It is a fourhanded image, but two of its hands are broken. Of the surviving left two hands, the upper one holds a *śaṅkha* (conch-shell) and the lower one touches a *gadā* (a heavy rod-shaped weapon), placed upright on the *adhishṭhāna* (pedestal), which is partially broken. The two broken hands must have held the *cakra* (wheel) and the *padma* (lotus). The deity wears a *kirīṭamukuṭa* of simple style, *upavīta* (sacred thread), *kuṇḍalas* (ear-ornament) and a long *vanamālā* (*vaijayantī*) as *alaṁkāras* (ornaments) on his body, and a *kaṭivastra* (a dhoti) reaching down the knees, as *paridhāna* (dress) of the lower part of the body. It can be guessed that there was a plain and round *prabhā* (halo) behind the head of the deity, now broken off.

The image bears an inscription on the back. K. N. Dikshit has deciphered the inscriptions and on the basis of the style of the script, he has placed the image in the 9th century A.D.[7]

This inscribed image from Deopānī resembles very well a late Gupta image of the deity, now in the possession of the Raṅgpur Sāhitya Sabhā Pariṣad.[8] Like this image, the image from Raṅgpur also is in *samapādasthānaka* attitude on a simple *adhishṭhāna* and had four hands of which only two hands are extant. Both the front hands of the Raṅgpur image are lost. The right backhand of this image touches a *gadā* placed upright on the *adhiṣṭhāna*, while the left backhand touches a *cakra* placed in the same way on the *adhishṭhāna*. The broken front hands of this image must have been stretched forward, holding a *śaṅkha* and a *padma*. Both the images are short, less decorated and the *kirīṭa-mukuṭas* in both of them are less conical. Other *alaṁkāras* and *paridhāna* and the *prabhā* are all common with the exception of a *vanamālā*. The Raṅgpur image, unlike the Deopāni image, does not wear a long *vanamālā*. The physiognomy of the Deopāṇī image, unlike the image from Raṅgpur, seems to have a tribal affiliation. However, it is a local variation.

From the above comparison, it is clear that both the images have the same style and bear common features excepting a few local variations. The Raṅgpur image, stylistically, belongs to A.D. 6th or 7th century. Similar icons of Vishṇu executed in the Pāla style, are found in Bengal, though not very common. For instance, the image of the deity belonging to A.D. 7th or 8th century, preserved in the Rājaśāhī Bārendra Museum[9] can easily be compared with ours. In fact, by the 8th century, in eastern India and elsewhere, the high tide of the Gupta tradition had subsided; however, a little refined sensuousness and sensitive abstractions of the Gupta art were left as the peculiar quality of the early 9th century work.[10] Therefore, Dikshit has rightly remarked that the present image bears the characteristic feature of the late Gupta or the early Pāla sculpture. But our conjecture is that the present images, stylistically, should date from 8th century and not from 9th century, as Dikshit thinks.[11]

According to the *Agni-purāṇa*,[12] the *Padma-purāṇa*[13] and the *Rūpamaṇḍana*[14] the present image may be of Vāmana, one of the 24 forms of Vishṇu.

A torso of Vishṇu, having four hands, is found in the same place, now preserved in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. It is carved on a block of basalt, measuring 46 cms×27 cms. The right fronthand of the figure holds a *cakra*, while the left fronthand holds a *śaṅkha*. Both the hands are seen stretching forward, while holding the respective *āyudhas*. The left backhand hangs down and holds on a *padma* (?), which is on the *adhishṭhāna*, while the right backhand touches a *gadā* placed upright on the *adhishṭhāna* in the same way. The hand of the image is broken. The body of the figure is adorned with the *alaṁkāras* like *puṣpakuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, and a *vaijayntī*. The *kaṭivastra* worn by the figure is short and seems to be thick. The figure seems to have an *uttarīyavastra* of which the two ends are visible on both the sides. The *adhishṭhāna* of the image is broken. It is quite likely that behind the head of the image, like the former case, there was a round and plain *prabhavalī*, which might have been broken off along with the head of the images. On the basis of the characteristic features and style like the former image, the present one also may be placed somewhere in A.D. 8th-9th century.

According to all the three texts, *viz*, the *Agni-purāṇa*,[15] the *Rūpamaṇḍana*,[16] and the *Padma-purāṇa*,[17] it is an image of Govinda, a form of Vishṇu.

In the same site two small icons of Vishṇu displaying the same style and features are noticed. All of them have peculiar facial expression and are more akin to the tribal physiognomy of the locality. Both of them are fourhanded. The first image holds clockwise, *gadā*, *cakra*, *varada-mudrā* and *śaṅkha*. The second image holds *śaṅkha*, *padma*, *cakra* and *gadā* in the same order.

Another image of the deity of the same style has been noticed at Dabakā, near Nowgong, measuring about 74 cms × 41 cms. It is also carved on a block of basalt. Here the deity holds the *āyudhas* in the four hands in the following way : right back a *cakra*, right front a *padma*, left back a *gadā* and left front a *śaṅkha*. The person of the deity is adorned with a short and simple *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *upavīta* and *valayas*. The *kaṭivastra* is a long *dhoti* touching the *adhishṭhāna*, which is quite simple. In this case, the *vaijayantī*, the prominent *alaṅkāra* of Vishṇu, is absent, as in the case of the late Gupta image of Vishṇu from Raṅgpur,[18] referred to already. On the strength of the style, the present image can be placed in the same period to which the former two images belong.

According to the *Agni-purāṇa*[19] and the *Rūpamaṇḍana*,[20] the present image is of Śrīdhara, a form of Vishṇu. But according to the *Padma-purāṇa*,[21] it is identifiable as Hṛishikeśa, the tenth form of Vishṇu.

All these images have more or less the same style and same characteristic features. In all these cases we see that the attendant figures, the consort and the *vāhana* of the deity are not executed. The *āyudhas* of the backhands rest on the simple *adhiṣṭhāna*; these hang down with a view to touching the *āyudhas* and they do not rise up as are commonly seen in other Vishṇu images from different places. The front hands here stretch forward holding the respective *āyudhas*. In all these cases, the belly of the deity is seen a little bulky; in the first and the fourth cases, the eyes are half closed, nose is not very pointed and the shape of the face of the deity is oblong, which is a peculiar local feature. The sculptor did not arrange a round *prabhā* behind the head of the image from Dabakā. Possibly it is a local variation. However, images from Deopāṇī can be easily distinguished from the images recovered in other places of Assam.

The next image of the deity was discovered in the bed of the Tihu river. Now, it is in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. This splendid work of art measures 41 cms × 18 cms. It is carved on a block of basalt. Like the former instances, this image is also fourhanded and in the *samapāda-sṭhānaka* attitude. The *āyudhas* held by the deity in his hands are as follows : right-front a *padma* (?), right-back a *gadā*, left-front a *śaṅkha* and the left-back a *cakra*. The backhands of the deity stretch upwards, while the front ones stretch forward like the common image of the deity found elsewhere in India. He wears the full jewellery (*alaṁkāras*) and a thin *uttarīya-vastra* in the upper part of the body and drapes his lower part with a *kaṭibandhana* or a *kaṭimekhalā* and a short thin *kaṭivastra*. The *pīṭha* (pedestal) of the god is formed by a *padma*. To the right of the deity is seen the *sthānka* figure of Śrī (Lakshmī). Śrī stands in *tribhaṅga* (slanting) posture on a *padma*, holds a *chowrī* (a wooden receptacle) in her right hand, keeps her left hand in *koṭyabalambita* pose. To the left of the deity stands the figure of *Pushṭi* (Sarasvatī) on a *padma* in the same attitude as *Lakshmī*. Pushṭi holds a *viṇā* with both of her hands. Both these figures look young and have all the *alaṁkāras* and *vastras*. Their heights reach the thighs of the deity. Again to the right of Śrī there is a miniature figure of Jayā and likewise a figure of Vijayā is seen standing to the left of Pushṭi. Above the heads of Śrī and Pushṭi on both sides of Vishṇu two *padmas* are seen.

The *śilāpaṭṭa* (stele) above the head of the deity is pointed and beautifully decorated. It had a *Kīrttimukha* at the top, now broken off. On either side of the

Kīrttimukha there is a figure of *Vidyādhara* holding a *mālā*. A small *prabhā* is also depicted just behind the head of the deity on the *śilāpaṭṭa*. On both sides of *śilāpaṭṭa* figures of animals (lion and elephant) are depicted. The *adhishṭhāna* is decorated with *padmakośas* (lotus buds) and it contains the figure of Garuḍa in *añjali-hasta* pose and a male figure, which is probably that of the donor of the image with his joined palms, held near the chest in adoration.

The present image of Vishṇu can easily be compared with some of the icons of the same deity carved by the Sena artists of Bengal. Specially, it has a striking similarity with an icon of Vishṇu of the same school, belonging to late A.D. 12th century. It comes from Gosānivāḍī, East Bengal, now preserved in the Dacca Museum.[21] Like the image in question, the image brought for comparison, is also four-handed and in the *samapādasthānaka* attitude. In the same way, it holds a *padma*, a *gadā*, a *cakra* and a *śaṅkha* in the four hands and is bedecked with similar ornaments. The *mukuṭa*, worn by the deity in this image, is quite similar to that of ours. To the right of the deity in this icon, the figure of *Lakshmī* and to the left of the deity, that of Sarasvatī are depicted in the same way. Again, here, to the right of the *sthānaka* figure of Lakshmī the figure of Jayā and to the left of the figure of Sarasvatī the figure of Vijayā are depicted, as in ours. The *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image is pointed and has the figures of *Kīrttimukha* and *Vidyādharas*. The *adhishṭhāna* of the image of the deity like the *adhishṭhāna* of our image contains the figures of the *vāhana* and a *bhakta* (devotee). In both the cases the decorative motifs of the *śilāpaṭṭa* and the *adhishṭhāna* are quite common. Over and above, the physiognomy of both the figures are quite same.

It is now clear from the above comparison that the details of the image in question are strikingly similar to that of Vishṇu image from Bengal, both of which belong to late A.D. 12th century. On this basis, we can safely conclude that the present image has all the characteristic features and even the minute details of the Sena sculpture of Bengal and that it belongs to the same period to which the image brought for comparison belongs. It is the form Trivikrama of Vishṇu, according to all the three texts, referred to already.[22]

At Netāidhubunīghāt, Hājo, a big-sized rock-cut image is seen in the same style as the above icon of Vishṇu. The image is carved on a huge granite block. It is a *samapāda-sthānaka* image of the deity like the earlier ones. This four-handed image holds a *gadā* in the upper right hand, a *cakra* in the upper left, a *śaṅkha* in the lower left and a *padma* in the lower right. The deity is decked with a *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *vaijayantī*, etc, and wears a *kaṭimekhalā* and a *kaṭivastra*. To the right of the deity the figure of Lakshmī is seen in *tribhaṅga* posture holding a *chowrī* and to the left of the deity Sarasvatī is depicted in the same posture with her *vīṇā*. Above the heads of Lakshmī and Sarasvatī two *padmas* are seen. The *pīṭha* of the god is on a *padma*. Above the head of the deity the *Kīrttimukha* and two *Vidyādharas* are absent. The *vāhana* is also not shown here. Though this image of Vishṇu carries the characteristic features of the Sena sculpture of Bengal, yet it has a little crudity. According to the *Agni-purāṇa,*[23] the *Rūpamaṇḍana*[24] and the *Padma-purāṇa,*[25] it is identified with *Trivikrama*, another embodiment of Vishṇu.

A beautiful image of Vishṇu measuring 76 cms × 46 cms. is noticed at Rengbeng, near Nogon. This piece of sculpture is at present kept near the Kathiātuli (Rengbeng) Block. Here the deity stands in *samapādasthānaka* attitude on a *padma* and holds in his four hands clockwise : *padma*, *gadā*, *cakra* and *śaṅkha*. The person of the deity is adorned with the usual *alaṁkāras*. He wears a *kaṭivastra* of thin fabric. An *uttarīya-vastra* is also seen on his body. To the right of the god, Laksmī and to the left Sarasvatī stand in *tribhaṅga* pose, each on a *padma*. Below the *padma* on which the deity stands is seen beautifully executed *patralatās* and *padmakośas*. Here two donors are seen in *añjalī-mudrā*. The figure of Garuḍa is also well depicted. The conventional pointed *śilāpaṭṭa* is decked with a *kīrttimukha* flanked by two *Vidyādharas*. This piece of sculpture is in perfect state of preservation. Looking at the style of execution of the image, it can be said, without hesitation, that the date of this piece of art can be pushed back to the middle of A.D. 12th century, when the artistic talent of the sculptor of eastern India reached its zenith.

According to all the three texts, *viz*. the *Agni-purāṇa,*[26] the *Padma-purāṇa*[27] and the *Rūpamaṇḍana,*[28] where the descriptions of all the 24 forms of Vishṇu are incorporated, this image is indentified as *Trivikrama*, the 7th form of Vishṇu.

We have come across three images of the deity of the same style as the earlier one. They are noticed in three different places in the district of Nogaon. The first image comes from Kāwaimārī,[29] the second image hails from Hātisung-Gedāvari village, while the last one is preserved at the house of Sri N. Sharma Bhagavati of Gojpuriā village. They are strikingly similar to one another and offer a good deal of resemblance to the deity from Rengbeng, described above.

Each of these images is carved on a block of basalt measuring approximately 92 cms × 46 cms. All the images are in the *samapādasthānka* attitude and are four-handed. They hold the same *āyudhas*. The *āyudhas* are clockwise : *padma*, *gadā*, *cakra* and *śaṅkha*. In all the cases we notice that the deity is adorned with usual *alaṁkāras* and he wears the usual *dhoti* as the *kaṭivastra*, as we have seen in the previous images. In each case, Lakshmī and Sarasvatī are seen attending upon the deity in their usual attitude. Below the *pīṭha*, in all the cases *padmakośas* and *patralatās* are carved beautifully as in the common images of the Sena School. Garuḍa, the *vāhana* of the god, is figured in the usual way below the *patralatā* carving of each image. Other decorative designs of the *śilāpaṭṭas* of these images compare well with those of the previous images. It is to be noted that all the images have a *tilaka* each on the forehead.

Looking at the *āyudhas* of these images, it can be said that according to the *Agni-purāṇa,*[29a] the *Padma purāṇa*[30] and the *Rūpamaṇḍana*[31], like the previous image of our discussion, all the three images are identifiable with the manifestation of Vishṇu in the form of Trivikrama.

All these images, including the earlier one, very well resemble an image of Vishṇu sculptured by the Sena artists of Bengal. If we compare, for example, the Vishṇu image from Sundarban, 24 Parganas District of Bengal,[32] with our images, we find that in all the cases the deity stands in the same attitude, i.e. in *samapāda-sthānka* on a *padma*, holding the following *āyudhas* clockwise : *padma*, *gadā*, *cakra* and *śaṅkha* and that the deity is attended by Śrī and Sarasvatī in *tribhaṅga* posture holding their *āyudhas*. The person of the deity is decorated in one and the same style. The *śilāpaṭṭas* of our images are strikingly similar to that of Sundarban image. Even the artists did not forget to put a *tilaka* on the forehead of each of the images under discussion and the image borrowed for comparison.

Therefore, it can be safely concluded that the artists of Assam followed the same formula, in connection with the execution of the Vishṇu image, framed by the sculptors under the patronge of the Senas of Bengal. It is worth mentioning here that Sivaramamurti[33] has opined that in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal, the usual Vishṇu image of *trivikrama* type carrying clockwise : *padma*, *gadā*, *cakra* and *śaṅkha*, which is not found in South India. Again he has made a remark of great interest, that in Bengal and Orissa the *tilaka* of Vishṇu, which existed also in the early mediaeval South Indian Vishṇu images, like the third eye of Śiva, is almost always present in the early mediaeval sculpture.[34] It may be remarked here that Bihar, Bengal, Assam and Orissa can be included in one culural zone in general and in particular, Bengal and Assam can be taken as one single cultural unit.

The next images hail from Hojāi. The *samapāda-sthānaka* image is kept at Matorpaṭṭi of the Hojāi town under a shed. It is carved on a block of basalt. The *āyudhas* held by this four-handed image are clockwise : *padma*, *cakra*, *gadā* and *śaṅkha*. The figure of the deity is adorned, in the same way as we have seen in earlier images. To the right and left of the deity, Lakshmī and Sarasvatī are seen attending upon the lord in their conventional ways. The deity stands on a *padma*. Behind the head of the deity a *prabhā* is arranged. The upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is not shown here. The *vāhana* is also absent in this icon. The execusion of this image is not so refined as those of the image described above. Stylistically, it may belong to A.D. 9th century. Like all the above images this is also a *svayaṁpradhānamūrti* (independent image).

According to the *Agni-purāṇa*[34a] and the *Rūpamaṇḍana*[35] it is identified as the Śrīdhara form of Vishṇu. According to the *Padma-purāṇa*,[36] it is called the Hṛshikeśa, another form of Vishṇu.

At the southern slope of the Narakāsur hill (Kāhilipārā) near the Film studio, Guwahati, a hoard of the metal icons, conches, bells, shells etc. were found some years ago. These articles were discovered in a hole caused by three huge boulders.[36a] The icons are twenty-two in number. Of them, four are the icons of Vishṇu All of them are miniature bronze images.

The first image of the god is quite beautiful. The deity stands on a *padma* in *samabhaṅga-sthānaka* attitude. He has four hands. The *āyudhas* are as follows : *padma* in the right front, *cakra* in the right back, *śaṅkha* in the left front and a *gadā* in the left back hand. The head of the god is decorated with a *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*. His body is decked with the usual *alaṁkarās* and draped in usual *paridhāna*. According to the *Agni-purāṇa*[37] and the *Rūpamaṇḍana*,[38] it is Śridhara, the 9th form of Vishṇu. But according to the *Padma purāṇa*,[39] it is Hṛishikeśa, the 10th form of the god.

The next image of the deity stands in the same attitude and holds in his four hands clockwise : *padma* (?), *cakra*, *śaṅkha* and *gadā*. The front hands of the deity stretch forward and hold the *āyudhas*, while the back hands hang down and touch the *āyudhas* placed on the *pīṭha*, which is of a *purṇavikasita-kāmala* (full-bloomed lotus). The *ādhāra*[40] (frame) behind the deity is quite prominent. Above the *ādhāra* a round *prabhā* is arranged. Below the deity the *vāhana* is shown. According to the *Padma-purāṇa* it should be identified with the image of Hṛishikeśa, one of the twenty-four embodiments of Vishṇu. According to the *Agni-purāṇa*[40a] and the *Rūpamaṇḍana*,[40b] it is an image of Śrīdhara.

The standing posture and the style of holding the *āyudhas* of this image can be compared with those of one from Nālandā, reproduced by Banerjea.[41] As in the image in question, in the case of the Nālandā image of Vishṇu also, both the front hands stretch forward and the back hands touch the *āyudhas* placed on the *piṭha*. From the stylistic point of view, both the images from Kāhilipārā may be placed in A.D. 9th century.

The third image of the deity from the place stands in the same posture, *i.e. samapādasthānaka*. The style of holding the *āyudhas* is also the same as that in other two images. But in this case we do not see the *adhāra* behind the figure of the god. However, a *prabhā* of palm-leaf shape is arranged. Neither attendant nor *vāhana* is depicted. Stylistically, this image should be placed in the 8th century. This image is quite similar to a Vishṇu image from Deopānī now preserved in the State Museum, Guwahati. But the image from Deopāni has its own peculiarity. The fourth image of Vishṇu from the place is mutilated. The *pīṭha*, the *adhāra* and the *āyudhas* in two hands are broken and missing. However, it can be easily made out that the deity is in the *samapāda-sthānaka* attitude. The *prabhā* arranged behind the head of the god still remains.

A few years back very beautiful stone image of Vishṇu was acquired from Burhā-Burhī,[41a] about twenty miles from Morigāon in the Nogaon district, for the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. Now the image is displayed in the Museum. The image is cut in round on a block of black basalt measuring 46 cms × 26 cms. Here the deity is shown in *samapāda-sthānaka* attitude. He has four hands holding clockwise, *śaṅkha*, *padma*, *gadā*, and *cakra*. The deity is bejwelled with all sorts of usual ornaments. He is draped in a *kaṭimekhalā* and a *kaṭivastra*. On the upper part of his body an *uttarīyavastra* is beautifully shown. His conical *kirīṭamukuṭa* is also beautifully done.

To the right of the deity seen the figure of Lakshmī and to the left stands the figure of Saraswatī. Both the figures of the consorts of the god are well decked. To the right of the figure of Lakshmī stands a miniature male (?) human figure and likwise, to the left of Saraswatī stands a miniature male (?) figure. If they could have been identified as female figures, then they could have easily been taken as the figures of Jayā and Vijayā. But their male sex has become a barrier to their precise identities. The scroll below the *padma-pīṭha* of the deity is beautifully decorated with *padmakośas*. At the middle of this decorative part there are three figures.

Among these three figures the middle one may well be identified with Garuḍa, while the flanking figures on either side in the *ālidhāsana* may be taken as those of the donors. However, these two figures are not brightly clear. Either side of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is decorated with the *Gaja-vyāla* motif. Close to this scene on either side a *pūrṇavikasita-kamala* (full bloomed lotus) is carved. Above the head of the figure of the deity on either side of the *śilapaṭṭa* a pair of Vidyādhara is depicted. Unfortunately, the figure of Kīrttimukha at the top is broken and missing.

From the stylistic point of view, it will be right to place this piece of bonny art in the 12th century. According to the *Agni-purāṇa*,[42] *Rupamaṇḍana*[43] and *Padma-purāṇa*,[44] the present image is of *Trivikrama*, a variety of Vishṇu epitomes. This image is quite similar to the image of Vishṇu found in the bed of the Tihu river, described above. Like the present image, that image is also correctly identified as the *Trivikrama* form. A slight difference, however, is marked. The figure of the deity in the present case is cut in round with a special care. But the other image is cut in relief.

The next image of the god comes from Chāndmārī, Guwahati, measuring 26 cms × 20 cms, now being preserved in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. The image is mutilated. The lower portion of the *sthānaka* image, beneath the knee of the figure of the god is broken off and missing, so also the upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa*. Here the deity is shown holding clockwise, *śankha*, *padma* (?), *gadā* and *cakra* in his four hands. The deity is well-decorated and well-draped. Behind the head of the deity a round *prabhā* (halo) is nicely carved. Either side of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is decorated with *Gajavyāla* motif. Above this motif a *haṁsa* (swan) is noticed on each side. The style of the image bears 12th century traits. According to all the three texts referred to above *i.e.* the *Agni-purāṇa*,[45] the *Rūpamaṇḍana*[46] and the *Padma purāṇa*[47] the present image represents the figure of *Trivikrama*

Two miniature stone images of Vishṇu are preserved in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. The first image, which is in the *samapādasthānaka* attitude, holds in its four hands *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *gadā* and *padma*. The god is flanked by his consorts, Lakshmī and Sarasvatī. Below, Garuḍa the *vāhana* of the god is shown. The next image, though miniature in size, is some what bigger than the other one. Like the former image, this one also stands in the *samapāda-sṭhanāka* attitude, flanked by his consorts. The god is shown holding *śaṅkha, padma* (?), *gadā and cakra*. The *vāhana* of the deity is depicted below in the *adhiṣṭhāna*. Its stylistic consideration leads us to place the first image in about the 10th-11th century A.D. Both the images hail from Assam, but their exact provenances are not known.

A bronze image of Vishṇu (?), 56 cms high, was discovered in the ruins of an ancient temple near Dibrugar. Now the image is preserved in the Assam State Museum. The image was first published by K. N. Dikshit, who was of the opinion that "it seems likely that it dates from the late pre-Āhom period or about A.D. 11th-12th century."[18] Subsequently, in so far as the dating of the icon is concerned, he was followed by others.[49] While giving the description of the image, it should be stated that the figure of the deity is in the *samapāda-sthānaka* attitude shown with four hands without holding anything. All the hands are in the *tribhṅga* pose (bent at the elbow and wrist joints) and the *kartarimudrā* (the attitude in which the index and little fingers point outwards and the middle and the ring fingers are tucked in).[50] The *āsana* on which the god stands has a parrot in each of the four corners. Technically, it may be called *bhadrāsana*, but it has a good deal of similarity with the *gurvāsana* of the late mediaeval period. Of the two small female attendants, the one on the right holds a bud and *chowri* (?) and the other on the left has her hands in peculiar dancing pose. They may be Lakshmī and Saraswatī. The *vāhana* of the deity is not shown. The absence of any *āyudha* in his hands makes it difficult to identify the deity with Vishṇu with full confidence. But the style of the sculpture relates to the Āhom period. The *gurvāsana*, the style of keeping the hands, unproportionately raised chest, out-of-size thin waist etc., are the characteristic features of the sculpture of the Āhom period. This piece of art can be placed in c. A.D. 16th century, and not in A.D. 11th-12th century, as Dikshit thinks.[50a]

More images of this god are noticed in various ruins in middle Assam. In Gosāinjurī ruins, in the Nogaon district, five images of Vishṇu are noticed. The first is a big image measuring 123 cms in height. Here the deity is made to stand keeping the legs slightly apart. The back-hands are broken. The left front-hand holds a *padma* (?). The *āyudha* of the right front-hand is broken. He wears usual dress and ornaments. He is flanked by his consorts. The *vāhana* is not shown. The whole sculpture is carved out in a block of sand stone, the main figure being cut in round.[51] The image is in the seventh mound.[52]

The eighth mound of the Gosāinjurī ruins yields two images of the deity. One is a fragmentary image, 96 cms high. The other is defaced, but the *patra-kuṇḍalas*, *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*—long and conical, and his upper right hand (which alone remains) holding a *gadā*, as in Bihar and Bengal sculpture, can, however, be made out.[53] Behind the figure of the deity there is a *prabhā* with a dentil edge which bears a carving of a hovering Vidyādhara, with a scarf held in hands in the ethereal region, indicated by a circle with indented edges, as in Pāla representation.[54] A piece of stone, showing a hand with a *padma*, held by the stalk, as in Bihar sculpture, which has been found in the same mound, probably belongs to a smaller Vishṇu image.[55]

A Chāngchawkī, near Kāmpur, in the Nogaon district, an image of Vishṇu is noticed. "To the eastern part of the village, a slab of stone looking like a door or window lintel having three small figures around the figure of the deity"[56] is seen kept in a tin shed and worshipped. Vishṇu is holding *śaṅkha, gadā, padma* and *cakra* in the *sthānaka* attitude. It is learnt from the villagers that the stone slab was brought from the nearby Math-Bari ruins.[57]

At Dighalpānī in the same district, a *dvāraśakhā* of a sand stone contains three sets of Vishṇu images in three raised panels, each measuring 26 cms × 21 cms. The central figure of the deity is in *sthānaka* attitude flanked by those of Lakshmī and Sarasvatī. The other two images of the deity are depicted at a lower level and they are in *āsana* attitude.[58]

At Baḍgaṅgā, parts of a broken Vishṇu image with a simple *adhishṭhāna* in ordinary soft sand stone are seen.[59] The existence of a specimen of exquisitely fine workmanship on a basalt block being another *adhishṭhāna* in the place implies that there must have been at least two images of the deity. It is carved with *padma-kośa* design. The main image is lost. But from the remnants of this *adhishṭhāna* it can be made out that Lord Vishṇu along with his consorts, attendants Jayā and Vijayā were shown.[60]

From Buḍā-gośain *thān* (a holy site) are reported three small figures of Vishṇu. There is a *dvāra-śākhā* which carries three images of the deity of smaller size along with the figures of the consorts.[61] From *Tarābasā*, Kārbi-Ānglong, an image of the deity in a mutilated condition is reported. The image is carved in a black basalt block. It is broken in the middle and only the top portion is available. At the back of the head adorned with a *kirīṭa-mukuṭa, prabhā* is shown, on the two corners of which two flying Vidyādharas are seen and just below another two Vidyādharas are depicted. The top of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is not pointed.[62] At Urvaśī a rockcut image of Vishṇu in *sthānaka* attitude holding usual *āyudhas* is noticed. A *padma* and a pair of Vishṇu-*pāda* are also seen on a rock.

At Kāwaimārī another image of Vishṇu is noticed. It is in *sthānaka* posture like the first image of the god described above. But it is not beautiful as that image. At Śrī Sūrya Pāhār there is a row of rockcut sculptures near a few votive *stupas*. The sculptures are badly worn out. Here two sculptures represent Śiva, while another Hari-Hara. The other sculpture should represent Vishṇu in *sthānaka* attitude. Above this row also, a few icons of Vishṇu (?) sculptured on rocks, along with those of Gaṇeśa are noticed.

(2) *Āsana variety*: Vishṇu images in the *āsana* variety are not commonly met with. In Assam, the number of Vishṇu images in the *āsana* attitude is quite meagre. Only a few images of this category have been noticed, so far, in the Brahmaputra Valley.

A splendid *āsana-mūrti* of the deity is noticed at Kāwaimārī, near Kāmpur.

At present the image is kept under a tin-shed along with the other image of Vishṇu described above. This is carved on a block of granite and it measures 26 cms. in length and 21 cms. in width. Here the deity is made to sit in *padmāsana i.e.* cross-legged on a *lotus*. The āyudhas placed in his four hands are clockwise; *padma, cakra, gadā* and *śaṅkha*. The back-hands of the deity rise up, holding the respective *āyudhas*. The lower right hand is kept in the usual pose, while the lower left hand seems to touch the *āsana* (lotus seat), keeping the *āyudha* in the hand. The deity wears usual dress and ornaments. The *patralatā* at the bottom is well decorated with *padmakośas*. Garuḍa is also seen below in the *patralatā* in usual posture. The upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is broken. However, the remaining portion of the *śilāpaṭṭa* and the figure of the deity show that this is a refined piece of sculpture, in which the finishing touch was given by some good master having a sound grip over the theory and practice of the fine arts. Stylistically, it is placed in A.D. 12th century.

According to the *Agni-purāṇa*[63] and *Rūpamaṇḍana*[64] the image represents the form of *Śrīdhara*, the 9th embodiment of Vishṇu. On the other hand, the *Padma-purāṇa* calls it Hṛishikeśa.[65]

The present image can be contrasted with the one from Bāgali illustrated by Rao.[66] Both the images are seated in the same attitude, *i.e.* cross-legged on *padmāsana*. But the image reproduced by Rao, is in *yogamudrā i.e.*, the front hands of the image are kept on the lap, one over the other, while the left front-hand of our image tries to touch the *āsana* carrying the *āyudhas*. In both the cases, we see that back-hands are shown rising up carrying the *āyudhas*. The *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image, brought in for contrast, is very ornamentally decorated. But in our case, we see that the remaining portion of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is not much decorated. In the case of the image from Bāgali, we do not see the *vāhana*. But in the image from Kāwaimāri the presence of Garuḍa in his usual reverential pose (*añjali hasta* pose) is noticed.

The second figure of the deity (217 cms × 186 cms) is carved on a very huge granite rock at Śukreśvar, Guwahati. This is the biggest of all the images found in Assam. To the left of the figure of Vishṇu, there are those of Śiva and Mahishamardinī and to the right, are those of Sūrya and Gaṇeśa. All these five images are in a row and face the river Brahmaputra towards the west.

The present figure of Vishṇu is shown seated in *vajraparyaṅkāsana, i.e.* crossing the legs over each other and exposing the toes. This four-handed image of Vishnu holds in its lower right hand *śaṅkha*, in the upper right hand a *padma*, in the upper left hand a *gadā* and in the lower left hand a *cakra* (?) which is broken and so also the palm of the hand. Though the palm of the lower left hand is broken, yet it can easily be presumed that it was in the same style or pose, as the extant palm of the lower right hand, which rests on the right leg holding the aforesaid *āyudha*. The fore and little fingers of the hand bend backward and seem to try to touch the *āsana* and at the same time, the other fiingers stick up the *āyudha*. Though those two fingers seem to try to touch the *āsana*, yet it cannot, in any case, be said that they form *bhūmisparśa* Mudrā because of the fact that in this mudrā, generally, the palm of a hand is kept upward on the lap and all the fingers of the other hand touch the *āsana*.

The figure is adorned with a conical *kirīṭa-mukuṭa* and other ornaments. The lower part of the body of the figure is draped in a short *paridhāna*. Below the *āsana* the *vāhana* is depicted. From the physiognomical point of view, the figure seems to be well depicted. Its face is round and the chest is broad, while the waist is thin. The nose of the figure is slightly mutilated. The deity sits on a *purṇavikaśita padma*. According to the *Agni-purāṇa*,[67] the *Padma-purāṇa*[68] and *Rūpamaṇḍana*,[69] the image depicts the Nārāyaṇa form of Vishṇu.

A stone pillar piece from Numalīgarh carries an image of Vishṇu in *mahārājalīlā* attitude on a *padmāsana* (lotus seat). The four-handed figure of the deity holds *gadā* and *śaṅkha* with its upper hands and *akshomālā* with the lower left hand. The lower right hand is held in *upadeśa-mudrā*.[69a]

On the way to Kāmākhyā near the rock-cut images of the Buddha two images are noticed sculptured in a separate rock. Both the sculptures show that they represent some male divinities in the *āsana* posture. Both the figures are quite similar to each other. In both the cases the deity is made to hold the *āyudhas* clockwise (upper left) : *gadā*, not clear and *padma*(?). The lower front-hands are made to rest on the knees, while holding the *āyudhas*, which are not recognisable. In both the cases a *jaṭāmukuṭa* is seen on the head. However, the figures are badly weathered and it is difficult to say actually whom they represent.

We have already mentioned that in addition to the image of the deity, i.e. Vishṇu, on either side the images of Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Śiva and Mahiṣamardinī are also sculptured in one row at the site. The figure of Śiva and Mahiṣamardinī are unfinished. The represention of the whole scene is perhaps intended to show Vishṇu at the centre of the *pañcadevatās*.[70] K.L. Baruah is of the opinion that it was an image of Buddha-Janārdana.[71] R.M. Nath surmises that previously it was an image of Buddha, but later on, it was transformed into the form of Vishṇu image.[72] Nath's view is not convincing. Simply because, any Buddha image has only two hands, whereas the present image has four hands and holds *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *gadā* and *padma*. Our contention is that the present image took this shape owing to some influence of Buddhism, which could not become popular in Assam. Probably, sculptors found it suitable to carve this image of Vishṇu in the style of the Buddha, amongst other Hindu deities instead of carving a full fledged Buddha image, as the people of this land were not willing to accept Buddhism even during its glorious days, nor was it accepted by the royal authorities. The date of the icon, from the stylistic point of view, may be pushed back to A.D. 10th-11th century.

This type of peculiar Vishṇu image, to our knowledge, has not been found in the bordering States like Nepal, Bihar and Bengal. Rao[73], Banerjea,[74] Agrawal,[75] Coomaraswamy,[76] Sarasvatī,[77] and other authorities have not mentioned such a type of peculiar icon of the deity. However, we can contrast the present figure of the deity with the so called image of a certain *Buddha-avatāra* of Vishṇu from Didanā[78] and with the figure of *yogāsana* Vishṇu from Bāgali.[79] The sitting postures of all these three images are quite identical with each other. But the former two are in *yogamudrā* while the present image place its hands on the legs holding respective *āyudhas*.

The next icon of Vishṇu of the *āsana* variety is found carved on a block of granite, fitted on the western *bhitti* (foundation structure) of the Sukreśwar temple, Guwahati. Like the former one, it is also seated cross-legged. But it sits on a coiling serpent which may be identified with Ādiśeṣa. The hoods of Ādiśeṣa, numbering nine, unfold themselves, canopy-like, above the deity. In its four hands attributes are placed clockwise : *cakra*, *gadā* (?), *padma* and *śaṅkha*. The front-hands rest on the crossed legs, holding respective *āyudhas* like the former one; and index and little fingers of both the front hands bend downwards, intending to touch the *āsana*, as in the former case. The figure is decked with a short *mukūṭa* having a slight conical shape and other ornaments. It wears *kaṭimekhalā* and *kaṭivastra* as the *paridhāna* of the lower part of the body. The nose of the figure is flat. On the forehead of it a *tilaka* is seen. Looking at the style of execution of the image, it can be conjectured that it is nothing but a later copy of the former image. The *Agnī-purāṇa*,[80] *Rūpamaṇḍana*[81] and *Padma-purāṇa*[82] unanimously agree to identify it with the *Govinda* form of Vishṇu. This type of Vishṇu image sitting on Ādiśeṣa is rather rare. However, some scholars[83] have taken it to be a pre-Āhom sculptural work. But its style and placement lead us to think that it is a sculpture of the Āhom period.

Another very fine piece of sculpture from Guwahati, now in the Assam State Museum, is an image of Vishṇu in the *yogāsana* attitude. It is carved on a black schist measuring 84 cms × 56 cms.[84] Unfortunately, all the hands are broken off. However, we can infer that the front-hands were in *dhyānamudrā* and the upper hands rose up holding the *āyudhas*. The figure of the deity is surrounded by the miniature images of Mahisamardinī, Gaṇeśa and two human figures. There is a round *prabhāvalī* with (flaming rays which resemble *latā* or ornaments) proceeding outwards. Outside the *prabhāmaṇḍala* the miniature figures are depicted. The presence of Gaṇeśa and Mahiṣamardinī (Durgā) leads us to infer that the idea was to depict Vishṇu in the centre of the five gods (Pañcadevatā). Why the other two figures in that case were not depicted as Sūrya and Śiva is not known. The whole sculpture is of very rare type. Had the four hands of the icon been not broken, it would have been a fine specimen of Indian sculpture. Stylistically, the date of the icon may be pushed back to the 10th or 11th century. The style of the icon is similar to the style of the late Pāla sculptures. A few images of the deity in this postures are reported from Dīghalpānī, Mahāmāyā temple, Ākāśīgaṅgā and Numalīgrah.

At Dīghalpānī a *dvāraśākhā* carries three small images of Vishṇu. The middle one is a *sthānaka* Vishṇu. The other two depicted at a lower level are in the āsana posture. One broken *stambha* of which the top is octagonal and the base is square, carries an image of the deity as in Mahāmāyā temple. The deity is in the *āsana* posture. The figure measures 20 cms × 23 cms.[35] The image of the god from *Ākāśīgaṅgā*, occurs in an archive There are two images of Vishṇu. Both of them are depicted in the *āsana* posture. But the consorts in both the cases are depicted standing.[86] The last image hails from Numalīgarh. A cubical part of a *stambha* at the site bears on one side an image of the deity, who is shown in the *rājalilā* pose on a *padmāsana*. The upper hands carry *gadā* and *śaṅkha*, the lower right hand is in *upadeśa-mudrā*, while the lower left hand holds an *akshamālā*.[87]

At Dulāl Mādhab, Gopāl Mādhab and Saubhāgya Mādhab, Koliābor circle, Nogaon District, three images of seated Vishṇu are reported. The icon at Dulāl Mādhab is said to have been of excellent workmanship, while the image at Gopāl Mādhab is carved not so artistically, but it is a good piece of sculpture. Both the images from Dulāl Mādhab and Saubhāgya Mādhab are datable to A.D. 10 or 12th century, on stylistic consideration.[88]

From the observations on the specimens on Vishṇu images, it is evident that *sthānaka* image of Vishṇu outnumbers the other variety. In Bengal and other regions of India also the *sthānaka* images of Vishṇu are found in good number. Images of the deity in the *āsana* variety are few and far between in Assam. The *śayana* variety is represented only by the image of the deity from Aśvaklānta and this image too belongs to the Āhom period. Not a single image of Trailokyamohana, Vaikuṇṭha, Garuḍa-Nārāyaṇa, Viśvarūpa, etc. is found in Assam belonging to the pre-Āhom period. Only one image of Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa has recently been discovered in Assam. In the pre-Āhom period, except the twenty-four forms, other types of Vishṇu images were not popular in Assam. However, many images of *avatāras* of Vishṇu have been found in the State. They are described in the following few pages.

Avatāras of Vishṇu

ICONS of all the ten *avatāras* of Vishṇu *i.e.* (1) Matsya, (2) Kūrma, (3) Varāha, (4) Narasiṁha (5) Vāmana, (6) Paraśurāma, (7) *Rāma*, (8) *Balarāma*, (9) Buddha and (10) Kalki are noticed in Assam. Sometimes they are represented on long slabs of stone. We have also come across some *svayaṁpradhānamūrtis* (independent images) of Varāha, Narasiṁha and Vāmana. At Tezpur two broken long slabs of stone containing some *avatāramūrtis* are seen. Exactly similar panels of the *avatāras* of Vishṇu are also seen at Moronoi, Hājo and in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. All of them have one and the same type of modelling. But, unfortunately none of them contains a complete set of the images of the *avatāras*, because they are broken pieces of the original panels. The images, sculptured on these slabs, are small in size which measure about 26 cms × 15 cms only. Another panel of the Vishṇu *avatāras* is seen in Assam. It is a rock-cut panel at Urvaśī. Though the images are affected, yet fortunately all the images of this panel are there and they are not mutilated. Like the images of the panels from Tezpur and other places, they are also small in size. All these images of the panels, together with the separate images found here and there in Assam, will be described individually under separate headings. On the strength of stylistic consideration they may be placed between A.D. 8th and 10th centuries.

1. *Matsya* : Textual descriptions of the image of Matsyāvatāra, like other *avatāras* of Vishṇu, are found in some classical works. For instance, the *Vaikhānasāgama*[89] and the *Viśhṇudharmōttara*[90] give the description of the image of the deity.

In Assam, so far, only three examples of this *avatāra* have been noticed. One image of this *avatāra* is carved on the long stone slab looking like a *dvāra-śākhā*, preserved at the Cole Park, Tezpur. The image of this *avatāra* has been carved at the bottom and above it there are the figures of Kūrmāvatāra and other *avatāras* of Vishṇu. Here the deity is made to stand in the *samabhaṅga* attitude. The deity is represented in a hybrid form, *i.e.* the upper half is in the human form, having four hands and the lower half of the image is in the fish form. The deity in his four hands holds clockwise : *śaṅkha*, *gadā*, *cakra* and *padma*. The *alaṅkaras* that deck the upper part of his body are *kirīṭamūkuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *keyūras* and *valayas*. On either side of the deity a female figure is seen in the *sthānaka-dvibhaṅga* attitude. They are separated from the deity by a *laghu-stambha* (pillar). In other words, it can be said that all the three figures are carved in separate small *khaṭṭakas* (niches), the *khaṭṭaka* of the deity being a little projected. Whether the attendant figures are identical with the consorts of Vishṇu is not clear.

An image of this deity is reported from Nepal.[91] The style of representation of of the theme in this case is quite opposite to that of ours. Here the face of the deity is represented as fish, while the rest of the body is represented as human. Battasali[92] has reproduced a *svayaṁpradhānamūrti* of Matsyāvatāra of which the style of representation is similar to that of ours. Rao[93] has also reproduced an image of a similar type. But that seems to be of a late period. From the ruins of Chāduār figures of Matsyāvatāra and other *avatāras* of the god like those at Tezpur were noticed.[94] A dvāraśākhā collected from *Choudhury para*, Mornoi by the Assam State Museum authority shows a panel of Vishṇu-avatāra in which the second image in question occurs. It is a four-armed miniature hybrid figure. The āyudhas held by the deity are not clear. Stylishtically, the dvāraśakhā may be placed in C. 10th century or so. The third image of Matsyāvatara occurs in a *Vishṇupārā* from Mangaldoi, preserved in the Assam State Museum. The figure is depicted here as a fish only, unlike the other cases. The quality of the sculpture is not of high order because of the bad quality of stone.

2. *Kūrma* : The *Vaikhānasāgama*,[95] *the Vishṇudharmōtttara*[96] etc. give descriptions of the image of Kūrmāvatāra.

Tezpur yields an image of this *avatāra* of Vishṇu. This is found sculptured in the same panel of the *avatāras* of the god, preserved in the Cole Park. The sculpture is a miniature like the image of Matsyāvatāra, described above, and is carved just above the figure of the latter. The figure of the deity is carved in the hybrid form like the image of Matsyāvatāra of the same panel. The upper part of the figure is in the human form, while the lower portion of the image is sculptured in the form of *kūrma* (tortoise), who stands on the back legs. The deity had four hands. The lower hands are broken off. The right back- and the left back-hands hold a *gadā* and a *cakra* respectively. The lower hands must have held a *padma* and a *śaṅkha*, the usual *āyudhas* of Vishṇu. The deity is adorned with *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *valayas* and draped in a *kaṭimekhalā*. As in the figure of the *Matsyāvatāra*, here also we notice two female figures attending upon the deity from either side of it (the deity). The figure of the *avatāra* is in a projected *khaṭṭaka* just like the previous image.

We have three more images of this *avatāra* at our disposal. The first one comes from Mornoi in the district of Goālpārā, the second one is noticed on a slab of stone along with other *avatāras* in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati, and the last one is at Ūrvaśī. All these images are sculptured in three panels. The first and second figures are quite similar to each other. The style of representation and execution are same. Both of them are strikingly similar to the Tezpur image of Kūrmāvatāra, described above. They are represented in the same hybrid form. Each of them has four hands holding *cakra*, *gadā*, *śaṅkha* and *padma*. As in the case of our Tezpur image, in these two images also we see two female attendants on either side of the deity.

The image of the deity from Ūrvaśī is also quite small in size. This is a rock-cut image. Here also the deity is represented in the hybrid form. The *āyudhas*, held in his four hands are weathered, and not clear. However, it can be guessed that they are *gadā*, *cakra*, *śaṅkha* and *padma*. In this case we do not see any attendant.

P. R. Sarma[97] has noticed an image of Kūrmāvatāra in Nepal. That image is quite opposite to ours in representation. That image has the face of a Kūrma, the rest of the body being in human form. While the uppper part of each of our images is depicted in human form and the lower part is in Kūrma form. The image, illustrated by Rao[98] is similar to ours. However, that is of comparatively late period.[99]

3. *Varāha* : According to the textual descriptions, Varāhāvatāra-*mūrti* can be of three types, namely (a) Bhūvarāha or Ādhivarāha; (b) Yajñavarāha and (c) Pralayavarāha. But the images of Yajñavarāha and Pralayavarāha have probably not been yet discovered, so far, in India. The descriptions of the Ādivarāhamūrti are given in the *Vaikhānasāgama*,[100] *Agni-purāṇa*,[101] *Śilparatna*[102] and in some other texts.

A few images of this deity have been noticed. The first one hails from Sivasagar. Now it is preserved in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. This piece of sculpture is carved on a block of granite and the image measures 107 cms × 77 cms. This is the only *svayaṁ pradhānamūrti* of Varāhāvatāra in Assam. The four-armed figure of the deity has the face of a boar and the body of a man. The boar face is slightly raised up. In the right back-hand a *cakra* is placed and a *gadā* is placed in the left back-hand. The right front hand is seen lifting up the figure of Bhūdevī with its elbow and the lower left hand is seen in *kaṭyabalambita* pose. The deity stands in *ālīḍha* attitude, *i.e.* the left leg is shown as straight and right leg is simply placed on the coils of serpent, Ādiśeṣa, who is seen in *añjali-hasta* pose. The figure of Bhūdevī is slightly mutilated. The figure of the deity is decked with *kirīṭamukuṭa hāra* and *vaijayantī*.

The posture of the colossal Varāha image from Udaigiri[103] can easily be contrasted with that of ours. The main difference is that the former, being old, is a two-handed image, whearens ours is a four-armed figure, which is quite recent in chronological order. However, the present image compares well with a four-handed Varāhāvatāra-*mūrti* belonging to the beginning of the 10th century from Bihar.[104] The posture of the image of the deity is also similar to that of the images of the deity from Mahābalipuram,[105] Bādāmi,[106] Rājim[107] and Phalodi.[103] But these images differ from ours in details. They are depicted in great details while our image lacks profuse ornamentation.

A miniature image of Varāha is seen in Bāmunī hill, Tezpur. This image is found in a panel of some Vishṇu-avatāras. This image is a miniature one like the other images of the *avatāras* found in the panels hailing from elsewhere in Assam. The deity is in his usual posture, *i.e.* in the *ālīḍha* attitude placing his left leg on a padma held by Ādiśeṣa, who is depicted in a hybrid form, keeping the right leg firmly to carry the weight of the body. The deity has four hands. With the upper right hand he lifts the Devī, and with the upper left hand he holds a *gadā*. The right front-hand is seen on the chest in *abhayamudrā*, while the front-hand is in the *kaṭyabalambita* pose. The deity is made to face to the right. Two female attendants are seen on both sides of the deity. It is very doubtful to identify them with the consorts of Vishṇu. The person of the deity is decked with all sorts of usual *alaṅkāras*. The deity is separated from the attendants by two *laghu-stambhas*. The execution of the image is quite good. We do not see any difference between this image and our previous image, so far as the representation of the theme is concerned. They are quite similar to both the images of Varāha from Bengal, illustrated by Bhattasali.[109]

Similar miniature Varāha images are seen at Cole Park, Tezpur, in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati, and at Hayagrīva Mādhava temple, Hājo. All of them are sculptured in panels in the same style of execution and representation. In other words it can be said that they are the copies of the Varāha image from Bāmunī hill, described above. The vishṇupaṭṭa from Mongoldai preserved in the Assam State Museum shows the figure of Varāhāvatāra in animal form.

4. *Narasiṁha* : Texts like the *Vaikhānasāgama,*[110] *Śilparatna,*[111] *Agni-purāṇa,*[112] *Matsya-purāṇa,*[113] *Bhāgavata-purāṇa,*[114] *Vishṇu-purāṇa,*[115] *Padma-purāṇa,*[116] *Rūpamaṇḍana,*[117] *Śiva-purāṇa,*[118] *etc.* describe *Narasiṁhamūrti.*

Some icons of this deity in *ugra* (terrific) form and only one *śānta* (pacific) form have been noticed. The first image of this deity comes from the Old Water Supply, Guwahati. It is carved on a granite block also with some other images of different deities in medium size. The *sthānaka* posture of the deity is quite peculiar. Here the deity is made to stand erect on the right leg only, the left leg being horizontally kept bending at the knee. The toe of this bending leg touches the right knee. Hiraṇya, the *asura,* is made to lie on the thighs and on the bent leg of the god. The deity has four hands. The front-hand tear off the belly of the *asura,* while the back-hands hold the *jaṭācūḍas* (tufts of hair), well depicted on both sides of the deity. The face of the deity looks terrific. He wears *hāras, keyūras, valayas, vaijayantī* as *alaṅkāras* and *kaṭivastra* as *paridhāna.*

Another image of the deity of the same measurement as the previous image is seen at Bāmunī hill, Tezpur, is made to stand on the right leg, the left leg being horizontally parallel to the *pīṭha.* The *asura* is placed on the thighs of the deity. The front hands of the god tear off the belly of the *asura,* while his back hands hold the *jaṭācūḍas,* which hang from his head. The look of the deity is terrific. In fact, both the images are carved in the same formula and, as such, virtually there is no difference between them.

On stylistic ground, they should date to *c.* A.D. 10th century. This type of image of Narasiṁha standing on the leg is very rare. No leading authorities of iconography have described such type of image of this deity.

The images of Narasiṁha seen in panels at Cole Park, Bāmunī hill, Tezpur, Hājo and other places are strikingly similar in style to these two images described above. Though the panel images are small in size, yet they have the same features. They stand on one leg and hold the body of Hiraṇya horizontally.

An image of Narasiṁha is seen in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. It is collected from Guwahati proper. This image, which is carved on a block of granite, measures 81 cms × 46 cms. This is a four-handed image. In the right back-hand a *śaṅkha* and in the left back-hand a *cakra* are placed. The front-hands are seen tearing the belly of Hiraṇya, who is placed horizontally on the deity. The legs of this standing deity are wide apart. The *pīṭha* is constituted by a *padma.* Stylistically, the image may belong to *c.* A.D. 10th century. The *śilāpaṭṭa,* though to some extent pointed, is not decorated profusely. However, the sculptor did not forget to carve out the traditional *kīrttimukha* and a *prabhā* behind the lion-head of the god.

The next four-handed icon of the deity is seen in the same museum. It was also found in Guwahati. This image is slightly smaller than the previous image in size. Here also the deity is made to stand on a *padma,* keeping his legs apart. The *āyudhas* of the right and left back-hands are *gadā* and *cakra* respectivly. Both the front-hands are seen busy in tearing the belly of the demon-king *Hiraṇya*. Below the deity and the horizontally placed body of Hiraṇya, a figure is seen in human form. This figure is seen sitting and holding a *pātra*, probably, to collect the drops of blood from Hiraṇya's body. This figure can be identified with a *preta* (ghost). The presence of such a figure is not common. The image, on stylistic consideration, may be placed in A.D. 13th century, if not later. But, no doubt, it bears traces of pre-Āhom sculptural style.

Another image of the deity carved in the same style and in the same size of granite block, which hails from an unknown place, has been preserved in the same museum. In this instance, the deity is seen with only two hands which tear the belly of Hiraṇya placed, in the same way, on the thighs of the deity, as we have seen in the previous case. The deity stands on a *padmapīṭha* in the *tribhaṅga* attitude, which is not common in the case of Narasiṁha images. As in other two images, here also Garuḍa is absent.

The last image of Narsiṁha is seen at the residence of Shri Rajendra Nath Choudhury, Uzan Bazar, Guwahati. It is not properly preserved. Here the deity is shown with four hands in the usual posture.

All these images may, stylistically, be placed between *c*. A.D. 9th and 10th centuries. The first and the second are quite similar to each other. The only difference is that the latter includes a figure of *preta* which is not seen in the former. The third one also would have resembled the other two images, if that would have been four-handed None of these images can be compared with those from South India, illustrated by Rao.[119] However, the style of tearing the belly of Hiraṇya depicted in the images of Narasiṁha from Bengal, as reproduced by Bhattasali,[120] is quite similar to that of ours.

The image of Narasiṁha found at Deopānī is interesting and quite uncommon. At present, it is preserved in the modern *mukhamaṇḍapa* of the Deopānī temple. The image is seen standing on the right side of the entrance of the *antarāla* (inner-apartments). The image is carved on a block of granite measuring 61 cms × 31 cms. The deity has two hands. The right hand is in *varadāmudrā*, while the left hand is seen gripping but without holding anything. The *samapāda sthānaka* image of the deity stands on a simple *pīṭha*. The face of the figure represents a lion, while the body of the figure represents a man. Hiraṇya, whose belly is usually shown torn by the two hands of the deity is not shown here. The deity does not wear usual *mukuṭa* in this case. The *alaṅkāras* are *valayas*, *upavīta* and *vaijayantī*. He is draped in a short *kaṭivastra*. An *uttarīyavastra* is also seen on the upper part of his body. In this image the deity is depicted in *śāntarūpa* (pacific form). This rare icon of Narasiṁha can be called Kēvala-Narasiṁhamūrti, as the deity is singly carved. This image can very well be contrasted with the one from Bādāmi reproduced by Rao.[121] The image from Bādāmī is four-handed, while our image has only two hands. The Bādāmi image is in the *tribhaṅga* attitude, while ours is in the *samabhaṅga* attitude. The image from Deopānī is represented singly, while in the case of Bādāmi image we see a different picture, where attendant figures and the flying heavenly figures (vidyadhāras) are beautifully depicted. The face of the Narasiṁha figure, drawn by Sivaramamūrti[122] is quite similar to that of ours. Stylistically, the present image belongs to A.D. 8th-9th century. The Vishṇupaṭṭa preserved in the Assam State Museum, mentioned above shows a miniature figure of Narasiṁhāvatāra.

5. *Vāmana* : This is the fifth *avatāra* of Vishṇu. "Sculptures illustrating the Vāmanāvatāra falls under two categories : (1) the dwarf (vāmana), and (2) the huge colossus (virātarūpa) about to take three steps (*trivikrama*[123])." The *Vaikhānasāgama*[124] gives the text of the image of Vāmana in detail.

In Assam only three images of Vāmana belonging to the Pre-Āhom period have been noticed, so far. The first one is noticed at Deopānī. This is now placed on the left side of the entrance of the *antarāla* of the Deopānī temple. It is a two-handed image. Here the deity is made to stand on a *padma* in *sampāda sthānaka* attitude. The right hand of the deity holds an *akṣhamālā* while the left one holds a *kamaṇḍalu* (a brassware kettle for water) which is placed on the palm of the hand. The deity is depicted here without *kirīṭamukuṭa* on the the head. He has his other *alaṅkāras*, such as, *kuṇḍalas*, *valayas*, etc. He wears a *kaṭimekhalā* as the lower drapery. The big belly (*tundila*) of the deity is shown clearly.

This *svayaṁpradhānamūrti* of *vāmanāvatāra*, which is sculptured in a block of basalt, is really a rare piece of sculpture. The image of Vāmana, preserved in the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta,[125] can be contrasted with our image. The image from Calcutta is four-handed, wearing a *kirīṭa-mukuṭa* and attended by Śrī and *Puṣṭi*. While ours is a two-handed image without wearing any *mukuṭa* and without having any attendant.

The next image of this deity is found at Urvaśī. It is a miniature rock-cut image from Vishṇu Avatāra panel at the place. The image is weathered and the details are gone. The image is in *sthānaka* posture. It has two hands. The right hand holds a *kamaṇḍalu*, while the left one holds a *chatra* (umbrella). The legs of the deity in this image are made short, as in the former case. The big belly of the deity is quite distinct. The deity has no attendant figures. The Vishṇupaṭṭa preserved in the Assam State Museum, referred to already also depicts a dwarf figure of Vāmana holding a *chatra* with one of its two hands. To the right of this sculpture (above) in a separate *khaṭṭaka* a miniature figure of Trivikrama, raising its left leg upwards is shown.

6. *Paraśurāma* : The image of Paraśurāma is described in the texts like the *Mahābhārata*,[126] *Vaikhānasāgama*,[127] *Vishṇudharmottara*,[128] *the Vishṇu-purāṇa*,[129] and

Agni-purāṇa.[130] We have not come across any *svayaṁpradhānamūrti* of this deity. All the images, whatever we have at our disposal, are noticed in panels.

An image of the deity on a slab of granite also with other three *avatāras* of Vishṇu is seen at Bāmunī hill. The image is very small like the other images of the panels found elsewhere in Assam, as mentioned already. Here the deity is in the *tribhaṅga-sthānaka* attitude. He has two hands. The right hand holds a *paraśu* (axe). With the left hand he holds something near the chest which cannot be precisely identified. On either side of the deity, there is a female attendant holding a *chowri.* The *vāhana* of the deity is absent.

In Cole Park, Tezpur, a similar image of the deity is seen in the Vishṇu-*avatāra* panel. Here also the deity is depicted in the same style, but he has four hands of which the *āyudhas* of two hands are broken off. The right back-hand holds a *paraśu*, while the right front-hand holds a *gadā*.

In the panel from Urvaśī also a two-handed image of the deity is seen in the *sthānaka* attitude. Like the other two, this is also a miniature image. The right hand of the god holds a *paraśu*, while the left hand holds a *dhanu* (bow). The long *vaijayantī* worn by the deity is quite distinctly shown. Other details of the image are missing. The Assam State Museum possesses two figures of the deity. The first one is depicted in a dvāraśākhā from Choudhurypārā, Mornoi, wherein the deity is made to stand holding *paraśu* in his left hand. The other image is noticed in the Vishṇu-paṭṭa referred to above.

7. *Rāma* : Rāma is taken to be the seventh *avatāra* of *Vishṇu.* The *Vishṇu-dharmottara*[131] includes the textual descriptions of the image of Rāma.

Only a few miniature images of Rāma are noticed. The first is found in the long slab of stone containing some miniature *avatāra-mūrtis* of Vishṇu in the Cole Park, Tezpur. Here the deity stands on a simple *pīṭha* in the *tribhaṅga* posture. His right hand carries a *bāṇa* (arrow), while the left one holds a *dhanu.* On his either side a standing female figure is seen attending upon him, as we have seen in the case of other images of this panel. Hanumān, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa are absent here. This image is carved at the top of the broken long slab and the images of the following *avatāras* must have been broken off.[132]

The second image is noticed in the panel of the *avatāras* at Urvaśī. It is a *samapāda-sthānaka* image of Rāma having two hands. The right hand holds a *bāṇa*, while the left one holds a *dhanu.* The *vaijayantī* worn by the deity is quite distinctly visible. Other details of the image are lost. It should date some-time in A.D. 8th-9th century. The third image is noticed in the panel at Bāmunī hill.[133] The *dvāraśākhā* from Choudhurypārā, Mornoi, which is being preserved in the Assam State Museum, shows a miniature figure of the deity. The Vishṇupaṭṭa preserved in the same Museum also depicts a figure of the deity.

8. *Balarāma* : Balarāma, the eighth *avatāra* of Vishṇu, is the elder brother of Kṛshṇa. The *Mahābhārata*,[134] *Bṛhatsaṁhita*,[135] and *Vishṇudharmōttara*[136] give descriptions of the image of Balarāma.

Only a few miniature images of Balarāma have been noticed in the Brahmaputra Valley so far. All of them occur in the *avatāra* panels found in different places. The first image is seen in the panel at Bāmuni hill. This miniature image has only two hands. The right hand holds a *hala* (plough), while the left one rests in *kāṭyavalambita* pose. The deity stands on a simple *pīṭha* in *tribhaṅga* attitude. The deity is decked with all the usual *alaṁkāras*. He is attended by two female figures standing on his both sides, as we see in the case of the other deities of this panel.

The next image of our discussion is preserved in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati, and hails from Guwahati itself. The image is carved on a broken slab of basalt which contains the image of Buddha and *Kalki-avatāras* also. The present image is quite small in size like the previous one. It is a two-handed image. The right hand of the deity holds a *hala* and the left being kept in *kāṭyavalambita* pose. This *dvibhaṅga-sthānaka-mūrti* is quite similar to the former image. It has all the necessary *alaṁkāras* and two attendent female figures.

The third image is noticed at Urvaśī. The image is badly affected. However, this much it can be made out that this *samapāda-sthānaka* image holds in its right hand a *muśala* (?) and in the left hand a *hala*. No attendant figures are noticed, nor the *vāhana* of the deity is depicted here. It is a small image of the deity of the Vishṇu-*avatāra* in the rock-cut panel at the place. The dvāraśākhā from Choudhurypārā, Mornoi, now preserved in the Assam State Museum also depicts an image of Balarāma.

9. *Buddha* : The Buddha is taken by some authorities to be the ninth *avatāra* of Vishṇu. But sometimes the figure of the Buddha in *daśāvatāra* relief is replaced by the figure of Kṛshna in South India. The *Bṛhat-saṁhitā*,[137] *Vaikhānasāgama*,[138] *Vishṇu-purāṇa*,[139] *Agni-purāṇa*,[140] the *Hayaśīrṣa Pañcarātra*,[141] etc. include the textual description of the image of the *Buddhāvatāra* of Vishṇu.

Only a few images of the deity have been noticed. Both of them are quite small in size and found in the *avatāra* panels of Vishṇu. The first image is carved along with the images of Balarāma and Kalki-*avatāras* in a panel. This image is standing on a *padma*. The palms of the hands of the deity are broken off. However, looking at the position of the rest of the hand, it can be made out that the deity's hands were in *jnāna-mudrā*. The *ushṇīṣa* of the head is executed in detail, so also the *vaijayantī* and the *kuṇḍalas*. He wears a *kaṭimekhalā* and *kaṭivastrā* resembling a *dhoti*. The deity is flanked by two female attendants.

The next image is noticed at Urvaśī in a *daśāvatāra* panel. This miniature rock-cut image is in *yogāsana* attitude. The *āsana* of the deity is formed by a *padma*. Both the hands are kept on the lap, placing one over the other and forming a *yogā-*

mudrā. The details of the image are effaced by water. The next image of the deity is seen at Hājo.[142]

Now, we see that the artists did not find any difficulty in executing these images of Buddha in Assam, where Buddhism could not get recognition. However, at any cost, they cannot be taken as *svayaṁpradhānamūrtis* of the Buddha. The Vishṇupaṭṭa preserved in the Assam State Museum shows a standing figure of Buddha in *sthānaka* attitude.

10. *Kalki* : This is the last *avatāra* of Vishṇu. The *Vishṇudharmapurāṇa*,[143] *Vishṇudharmōttara*,[144] *Agni-purāṇa*,[145] *Hayaśīrsha Pañcarātra*,[146] *etc.* include detailed description of the deity.

Three images of the deity have come to light in the province, so far. The first is found in a slab of stone along with the images of the Buddha and Balarāma-*avatāras* in the the panel described above. Here the deity is seen sitting astride on a horse. He has two hands. The right hand of the deity holds a *khaḍga*, while the left one is seen holding the rein of the horse (*pragṛhyatāmavāijinaḥ*). The horse faces to the right. The person of the deity is decked with ornaments and he is draped in a short *paridhāna* (a *dhoti* ?). Two attending female figures are seen on either side of the deity in their usual posture. The image, though miniature is well executed.

The next miniature image of the deity is seen at Urvaśī. This image is a member of the *daśāvatāra*, sculptured on a rock. Here the deity, as in the previous case, is made to sit on a horse, with the legs on both side. The right hand of the deity holds a *khaḍga*, which rises up, as if it attacks somebody, while the left hand grips the rein of the horse. The image of the deity faces towards the left and so also the horse. This image is carved on the left end of the panel. Other details of the image are lost. The Vishṇupaṭṭa, referred to already also depicts an image of Kalki.

From the above descriptions of the specimens, it has become clear that in Assam the images of Vishṇu·*avatāras* occur in two ways—in panel and independently. However, images of all the *avatāras* are not found independently. Images of Varāha, Narasiṁha, and Vāmana are found in panels and separate slabs as well. The image of Kevala-Narasiṁha from Deopānī is noteworthy. The panels of Vishṇu-*avatāras* from Assam are found sculptured, generally, on *dvāraśākhā* of temple. The panel noticed at Urvaśī is the only example of rockcut panel of Vishṇu *avatāra-mūrtis*. The style of the panels of the images of the *avatāras* from this State, however, is peculiar. The Vishṇupaṭṭa from Mongoldai preserved in the Assam State Museum showing various *avatāras* of Vishṇu excepting Balarāma does not resemble with the Vishṇupaṭṭas and Vishṇu-cakras from Bengal illustrated by Banerji[147] and Bhattasali.[148]

KṚSHṆA : Descriptions of Kṛshṇa are found in many works. For example, the *Mahābhārata*,[149] *Bṛhat-saṁhita*,[150] *Agni-purāṇa*,[151] the *Matsyā-purāṇa*,[152] *Vaikhānasāgama*,[153] and the *Vishṇudharmōttara*[154] describe the image of Kṛshṇa.

Two images of Kṛshṇa have been noticed in the plains of Assam. Both the images represent the Venugopāla aspect of the god. The first image has been found sculptured on the western gate (*toraṇa*) of Kāmākhyā. It is a small image sculptured on a block of granite. This figure stands in the *samapāda-sthānaka* attitude and not crossing one leg over the other, the common posture of Venugopāla. Here the deity is shown playing on a *vaṁśī* (flute). "The head-dress of the image of Venugopāla in the shape of flames is a conical cap. A single necklace of *maṇis* (jewels) and an under-garment with central and lateral tassels recall the decorative feature of the Gupta and Pallava period, in North and South India respectively."[155] The standing posture of the image is not common and the image cannot be compared with those of the deity illustrated by Rao[156] and Banerjea.[157] The present image may, stylistically, belong to c. A.D. 10th century.

The second image of the deity is found on a huge rock behind the western gate of the temple. Here the *sthānaka* deity is in the *tribhaṅga* posture. The right leg of the deity crosses behind the left, which straightway carries the weight of the body. Both the hands hold a *vaṁśī* which is played with the lips. He wears *mukuṭa*, *hāras*, *keyūras*, *valayas*, *vaijayantī* and *nūpuras* as *alaṁkāra* and a *kaṭivastra* and a *kaṭimekhalā* as *paridhāna*. On both sides of the deity figures of Gopīs are seen.

From the point of view of profuse ornamentation and execution of the details of the dress, etc. this image may be sent near to a Hoysaḷa icon. However, a Hoysaḷa icon would be quite different from the present one in point of style. The posture of present image somewhat resembles that of the wooden image, illustrated by Banerjea.[158] However, that image is put to a later period. Images of the deity are also noticed from the temple ruins at Chārduār, playing on flute as Muralidhar or Venugopāla with the figures of attendants on both sides.[159] Images of Kṛshṇa along with Balarāma and Subhadrā were noticed in the temple of Jagannāth at Khetri.[160]

LAKSHMĪ : Lakshmī came out from *samudramanthana* (the churning of the sea) and then became the consort of *Vishṇu*. Iconographic texts of this deity are given by some authorities, such as the *Mārkaṇḍēya-purāṇa*,[161] *Viśvakarma-śāstra*,[162] *Matsya-purāṇa*,[163] and *Vishṇudharmōttara*.[164]

It is a very strange phenomenon in the Brahmaputra Valley that the goddesses with Vaishṇava affiliation are very rarely noticed. Though Vishṇu images are plenty in this region, the actual instances of the occurrence of Lakshmī and Sarasvatī are very rare.

An image of a female deity is seen in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. It is sculptured on a block of granite. It measures 48 cms × 16 cms. It is a two-handed image. Here the deity is made to stand in the *dvibhaṅga* attitude. The right hand of the deity holds a *padma*, while the left hand is in the *kaṭihasta* pose. The deity wears a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* and other usual *alaṁkāras* and *vastras*. The eyes of the goddess are mutilated. Whether this figure can be taken as that of Lakshmī is not clear. To the left of the deity a female figure is seen in *sthānaka* attitude and in *añjali-hasta* pose. It is also of the same height. This figure may be of a devotee or an attendant of the deity. Like the deity the attendant also stands on a *padma-pīṭha*. The sculpture is not of a very high order. The standing attitude and the pose of holding the *āyudha* of our image are quite similar to those of Bhūdevī image from South India, reproduced by Kramrisch.[165] But other features are contrary to one another.

The next image of our discussion is of Gaja-Lakshmī, preserved in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. It was collected from Sivasāgar. This image is quite different from the preceding one in point of representation of the theme. The image is carved on a block of basalt and it measures 107 cms × 92 cms. It is a two-handed image. Here the deity sits on a *padma* in *lalitāsana*. Both the hands hold two *mṛṇālas* (stalks of lotus) with *padmas*. The face of the deity is slightly mutilated. She has a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* and other usual *alaṁkāras*. While holding the *mṛṇālas* with her hands she keeps the grips on the knees. On either side of her head there stands an elephant to pour water on her head with its trunk. Both the elephants stand on two *padmas* of which the *mṛṇālas* are held by the hands of the deity below. The figure of the elephant standing on the right side is damaged. The *śilāpaṭṭa* is short and plain. It does not carry any decorative motif. Stylistically, it has affinity with the works of *c*. A.D. 8th century.

Two images of Gaja-Lakshmī are seen at Maudāṅgā, one at Mahāmāyāthān and one at Tezpur. At Maudāṅgā, the image of the deity is sculptured on the *śirapaṭṭi* of a ruined *dvāra* of a temple. Here the deity its shown seated in *padmāsana*. Both the hands rest on the knees. What *āyudhas* are held by the deity are not clear. However, it can be inferred that they are *padmas*. From both the sides two elephants are seen giving ablution to the deity. The image is so small that the details are not possible to be taken note of. The same *śirāpaṭṭi* carries a miniature image of Umā-Maheśvara also. Another *śirapaṭṭi* at the site contains a quite similar image of the deity.

The next image of the deity is found occuring in *śirapaṭṭi* lying in a state of disorder at Mahāmāyāthān in the Kārbi-Ānglong district. Here also the deity is made to sit in *padmāsana* attitude, as in the preceding instances. Both the hands of the deity hold *padmas* and rest on the knees. Two elephants with their raised trunks are seen bathing the deity. Both the image have, as we have seen, almost the same features. They have usual *alaṁkāras* and *vastras* most of which have become indistinct. Basing on the style, they can be placed in A.D. 8th-9th century. Like these instances of the images of Gaja-Lakshmī occuring in *dvāra-śirapaṭṭis* in Assam, some figures of this deity are found also depicted in dvāra-śirapaṭṭis of Orissan temples.[166] For instance, the *śirapaṭṭi* of the temple of Mukuteśvara contains the image of Gaja-Lakshmī.[167]

At Tezpur, a figure of the deity is seen sculptured on a slab of granite in the

Cole Park. The figure is small, measuring 26 cms × 21 cms. Here the deity is seated on a *padma* in the *lalitāsana* attitude. Both the hands of the figure rest on the knees and they seem not to hold any *āyudha*. The figure is decorated with a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* and *kuṇḍalas*. As the image is weathered, other *alaṁkāras* and the *vastras* have become indistinct. The elephants standing at the shoulder level of the deity on either side pour water on her with their raised trunks.

The figure of the deity from Mahābalipuram, reproduced by Rao,[168] is some what similar to that of ours. But the former sits on an *āsana* and both the legs kept hanging down. Moreover, the deity has four female attendants. In the case of the present image such features are not observed. The Gaja-Lakhshmī image from Khiching, Orissa[169] seems to have more resemblance with the present image, as far as the sitting posture of the deity and standing poses of the elephants are concerned.

SARASVATĪ : She is usually described in such texts as the *Vishṇudharmōttara*,[170] *Aṁśumadbedāgama*,[171] *Pūrvakāranāgama*,[172] *Rūpamaṇḍuna*,[173] *etc.*

We have only three instances of the image of Sarasvatī. The first image (110 cms × 63cms.) of this deity which was found at Sibsagar, is now preserved in the Assam State Museum. Here the deity is in the *sthānaka* attitude, having *tribhaṅgas* on the body. She holds a *vīṇā* with both the hands in her conventional way. She wears *ratnakuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, and *nūpuras* as *alaṁkaras* and *kaṭimekhalā* and *kaṭivastra* as *paridhāna*. In the place of a conventional *mukuṭa*, she has beautiful *keśabandha* (tassel for hair-do) on the head. The simplicity of the figure and the delightfully done drapery flowing round her body, mark it out as one of the elegent specimens of the pre-Āhom art belonging to about A.D. 11th century.

This type of image of the deity is not common. However the *tribhaṅga-sthānaka* posture of the image compares well with that of a lively figure of the deity, preserved in the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta.[174]

The next figure of Sarasvatī comes from Tezpur. It is noticed on a slab of granite in Cole Park. Here the deity is made to sit in *lalitāsana*. Both the hands of the goddess hold her *vīṇā* in the usual way. She wears a *mukuṭa* and *valayas* which are distinct. On consideration of the style, it can be roughly placed in A.D. 9th-10th century. This images can be compared with the images of Sarasvatī, reproduced by Bhattasali.[175] Both the images sit in the same posture and hold the *vīṇās* in the same way. But the difference of these two images cannot go unnoticed. The one is four-handed; while the other of ours is a two-handed image. At Chārduār one image of Sarasvatī was noticed.[176] Bloch noticed a crude figure of the deity in the ruins of the copper-temple, Śadiyā.[177] It may be of a later period. Another figure of Sarasvatī in *sthānaka* attitude on a broken piece of stone is being preserved in the Assam State Museum. Possibly the figure was depicted as the consort of Vishṇu which is lost.

VARĀHĪ : Varāhī is the sixth member of Sapta-māṭrikās. The description of the image of this female deity is given in the *Suprabhēdāgama,*[178] *Vishṇudharmōttara*[179] and *Pūrva-kāraṇāgama.*[180]

Like the *svayaṁpradhānamūrtis* of Cāmuṇḍā, as we have already noticed, *svayaṁpradhānamūrti* of the present deity is also very rarely sculptured. In Assam only one image of this deity has been noticed so far. This image is seen in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. Here the deity is made to sit in *lalitāsana*. The deity is endowed with two hands. With the left hand she holds a *gadā*. The āyudha of the right hand is beyond recognition as the image is highly weathered. The face of the deity resembles very well the face of Varāha. The deity seems to wear a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa.* No attendant is represented. Her *Vāhana*, an elephant, is also not depicted. The deity is looking to the right side. Stylistically it belongs to *c.* A.D. 9th century, or thereabout.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the image of Vishṇu were worshipped everywhere in the plains of Assam. Next to the images of Vishṇu are those of the *avatāras* of Vishṇu, which are found in panels as well as independently. The independent images of Vishṇu-*avatāras* also might have been worshipped. The panels of Vishṇu-*avatāras*, carved on long slabs of stone, must have been sometime or other parts of temple-edifices. Images of Kṛshna, found in Assam are quite a few. But it is a strange pheonomenon that the images of female deities, affiliated to Vaishṇavism, are very few in Assam, where the image of Vishṇu are found in plenty. Though some images of Gaja-Lakṣhmī are found, all of them are not independent images. The other images of female goddesses are those of Sarasvatī and Varāhī. They are sculptured independently. But in view of their ways of representation on almost square block of stone, it may be assumed that they were placed on some temple-walls.

II. *Sūrya Images*

There are some texts, such as, the *Mahābhārata,*[181] *Bṛhat-saṁhitā,*[182] *Matsya-purāṇa,*[183] *Agni-purāṇa,*[184] *Bhaviṣya-purāṇa,*[185] *Vaikhānasāgama,*[186] etc. which give the description of an image of Sūrya, the Sun-god.

A good number of Sūrya images have been discovered in this State. Although a strict classification covering all the types of the Sūrya images in the Brahmaputra Valley may not be possible here, yet they can broadly be resolved into two groups namely—

1. *Sthānaka variety and*
2. *Āsana variety.*

Again the *sthānaka* Sūrya images may be classified into two groups, namely—

a) *Sūrya images with ratha* (chariot) *and*
b) *Sūrya images without ratha.*

The number of the images in *sthānakamūrti* is large, while the number of the *āsanamūrti* is quite small.

1. *Sthānaka Variety* : (a) *with ratha* : The rock-cut image of Sūrya found at Śukreśvar (with *ratha*) alongwith the images of Śiva, Mahiṣhamardinī, Viṣhṇu and Gaṇeśa is worthy of notice. The 152 cms high figure of the deity stands in *samabhaṅga-sthānaka* posture facing the river Brahmaputra. Both the hands of the deity hold two *padmas*. The hands are broken at the elbow level, in all probability, at the hands of the iconoclasts. But the *padmas*, held by the deity, are noticed at his shoulder level. He is decked with a *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *keyūras*, and an *upavīta*. He wears a thick *kaṭivastra* as *paridhāna* of his lower part of the body, an *avyaṅga*[187] (undervest) and boots. The trace of *udīcyaveśa*[188] (short tunic or coat of a mail in North Indian style), *khaḍga-bandhana* (sword fastener) are also noticed. There are two female figures in the *sthānaka* attitude on both the sides of the deity. They may be identified as Nikṣhubhā and Rājñī, the consorts of Sūrya. Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā, who are usually depicted in Sūrya icon, are absent here. Seven horses[189] are seen below the feet of the deity, the middle one being inside the *cakra* (wheel) of the *ratha*. Aruṇa sits above the *chakra* in front of the feet of the deity. On stylistic consideration, the icon may be placed in *c.* A.D. 10th-11th century.

We have come across a few fine specimens of Sūrya image chiselled on black basalt blocks hailing from different places of the plains of Assam. They are almost similar to each other.

The first specimen (49cms × 27 cms.) was found at Dabakā, now being preserved in the Assam State Museum. Here the deity is in the *samapāda-sthānaka* posture on a *pūrṇavikaśita-padma*, placed on his *ratha*. Both the hands of the god hold *padmas* in his conventional way. He wears *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*, *hāras*, *kuṇḍala*, *upavīta*, *keyūras* and *valayas* as *alaṁkāras*, and a *kaṭivastra* as *paridhāna*. The *kaṭivastra* is very thin. The *avyaṅga* and *khaḍga-bandhana* are clearly depicted. Like the former image, the present one is also dressed in *udīcyavēśa*, *i.e.* he has the North Indian coat (*kañchuka*) on his body and a pair of boots on his legs. To the right of the figure of the deity stands Nikshubhā and to the left stands Rājñī. They hold a *cāmara* each. At the extreme right, the bearded Piṅgala stands holding a pen and an ink-pot. At the extreme left stands Daṇḍa and holds a *daṇḍa* (stuff). In front of Nikshubhā and Rājñī, Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā are represented by two female figures in the shooting pose, *i.e.* *ālīḍha* and *pratyālīḍha* postures respectively. Both of them are supposed to dispel darkness with their *bāṇas*, "and herald day a sense connoted by Ūṣā only ; Pratyūṣā meaning dusk, harbringer of night."[190] In front of the deity's legs there stands a miniature figure of a female, the right hand of which displays *abhaya-mudrā* and the left hand hangs down. This figure may be identified with Pṛthivī.[191] Just in front of her Aruṇa is seen. Below Aruṇa is represented a curious gaping biped, whose upraised trunk Aruṇa holds with his righthand, which evidently serves him in place of the gathered reins (*pragṛhyatām-*

vājinaḥ) of the seven horses.[192] At the bottom seven horses are seen drawing the *ratha.* The *ratha* is represented by only one *cakra* inside of which a figure of horse is carved. The *śilāpaṭṭa* is pointed and has a Kīrttimukha at the top and both the sides of it (*śilāpaṭṭa*) are occupied by two figures of Vidyādhara. Behind the head of the deity on the decorated *śilāpaṭṭa* a *prabhā* is arranged. It consists of flames rising up from the *adhishṭhāna* or the *ratha* on which the deity stands.

The second image of Sūryadeva comes from Ulubārī, Guwahati. This image is similar to the former image of the deity. Like the former image it also stands on a one-wheeled *ratha* drawn by seven horses and driven by Aruṇa. It wears the same *alaṁkāras* and *vastra* like the earlier image. Both the hands hold two *padmas* in the same way. To the right of the deity in this Piṅgala and to the left Daṇḍa stand holding their usual *āyudhas.* The consorts of the deity and the figures of Ūshā and Pratyūshā are omitted in this icon. Two male attendant figures are seen in this image on both the extreme sides, *i.e.*, to the right of Piṅgala and to the left of Daṇḍa. The style of execution of the horses below and the decorated *śilāpaṭṭa* of this image is quite similar to that of the Dabakā image described above.

The provenance of the third sculpture of our discussion is Mornoi. It is preserved in a *nāmghar* (prayer house) along with an image of Nandī. Here the deity is made to stand in the *samapāda sthānaka* attitude on the *ratha*, like the former ones. He holds two *padmas* in the usual way. The deity wears the usual *alaṁkāras* and *vastras*. Piṅgala and Daṇḍa are seen standing on either side of the deity and in between a Piṅgala and the deity and Daṇḍa and the deity, Nikshubhā and Rājñī stand holding a *chowri* each. As far as the depiction of Aruṇa, the *ekacakra-ratha* (one-wheeled chariot) and the seven horses is concerned, we find the same repetition here. Like the Dabakā image this also has the figure of Pṛthivī just behind the figure of Aruṇa. The *śilāpaṭṭa* has the same decoration as in the earlier cases. Here the traditional Kīrttimukha is flanked by two Vidyādharas in the conventional way.

Now, we see that all these three icons of Sūrya are more or less similar to each other. As regards the *alaṁkāras* and *vastras*, we do not see difference amongst them. All of them have the attendant figures of Piṅgala and Daṇḍa. In all these cases the middle horse is depicted inside the symbolic *ratha-cakra* (wheel of the chariot) and above it sits Aruṇa in his conventional pose. Other six horses are figured on either side of the *cakra* of the *ratha.* However, we do not find the presence of the consorts of the deity in the Ulubārī image. Another singularity is that in this image the figure of Pṛthivī is also omitted. Ūshā and Pratyūshā are depicted only in the first case. But the style of execution and the physiognomy of the figures are quite identical. Their measurements are also quite identical. All of them bear the characteristic features of A.D. 11th-12th century In point of style and execution they can be compared well with the Sūrya images from Gaṅgā-Sāgari,[193] Sukhabāspur,[194] Chopra,[195] Katalipara[196] and Ājmere,[197] all of them belonging to the Pāla-Sena art tradition of Bengal.

The next image (102 cms × 62 cms) for our consideration is found in the

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Śidheśwarī temple, Śoālkuchi. The image is carved on a block of granite. Here the deity probably stands on a *padma* in *samabhaṅga* attitude. The *padma* might have been worn out. In the usual way the deity holds two *padmas* with his hands. He wears a *kirīṭamukuṭa*, *valayas*, *upavīta*, and *avyaṅga*. He is draped in a *kaṭimekhalā* (?) and *kaṭivastra*. Piṅgala and Daṇḍa stand on both sides of the deity. The consorts of the deity Ūshā and Pratyūshā are not depicted in this image. Below the figure of Aruṇa, seven horses and the *ekacakra-ratha* are well depicted. Above the head of the deity on the pointed *śilāpaṭṭa* Kīrttimukha is figured.

A similar image (172 cms × 96 cms) with a slight variation is noticed at the same place. Here the deity is made to stand in the same attitude as in the former cases. He holds the usual *āyudhas*. The *alaṁkāras* and *vastras* of the deity are quite common. Nikshubhā and Rājñī are made to stand on either side of the deity. They hold a *chowri* each. The figures of Daṇḍa and Piṅgala are omitted here. The figure of Aruṇa is seen below. The horses of the *ratha* are depicted in the same way. The *śilāpaṭṭa* in this case is undecorated like the former one. It does not have the figure of Kīrttimukha on the *śilāpaṭṭa*.

Both the images from the site offer resemblance to each other in point of style. As regards the representation of the attendant figures, a little difference is observed in them. But the peculiarity of the second image is that both the hands of the deity are kept on the heads of his consorts while holding the *āyudhas*. These two images like a few images do not throw any light on their *udīcyaveśa*, as both the images are weathered. Stylistically, they may be assigned to *c.* A.D. 10th century.

The next image under our consideration is noticed at Pāṇḍu. This image is carved on a huge granite block on the bank of the Brahmaputra. Just near this image, there is an image of Indra. The present image has all the common features of an idol of the deity. It stands on a *ratha* in the usual attitude and holds two *padmas*. It wears the same *alaṁkāras* and *vastras*. To the right of the deity Nikṣubhā and Piṅgala and to the left Rājñī and Daṇḍa stand. Below Aruṇa, the seven horses and the *ratha* are depicted in the conventional way. The *śilāpaṭṭa* is pointed and has the figures of Kīrttimukha and Vidyādhara. The whole sculpture is carved in a shallow *khaṭṭaka* (niche). Stylistically, this icon may be attributed to *c.* A.D. 9th century. It seems, the polishing work of the image could not be finished.

At Bhogbāri, Mangaldoi, a slightly mutilated image of Sūrya was discovered and later on it was sent to the Assam State Museum.[198] The image carved on a block of stone appears in its conventional attitude. The deity is attended by usual figures. The *ratha* and seven horses are symbolically depicted. The image belongs to about 9th-10th century A.D. or to the period of the remains of Bāmunī hill, Tezpur and Gahpur with which the present image seems to have affinities.[199]

At Kāhilipārā, Guwahati, a bronze image of Sūrya has been noticed. This has now been preserved in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. Here the figure of the deity stands in usual attitude on the *ratha*. He holds two *padmas*.

On the right of the deity stands Piṅgala, while on the left stands Daṇḍa. They hold their usual *āyudhas*. In front of the legs of the deity there sits Aruṇa. Seven horses are depicted in a row. But the *cakra* of the *ratha* in this case are not shown. Behind the head of the deity a *prabhāvalī* is arranged.

Like some other images of Sūrya described above, this also does not have the North Indian coat of mail (*kāñchuka*). Whether the deity wears a pair of boots, is not clear, as Aruṇa sits in front of the legs of the deity. Other *alaṁkāras* worn by the deity, are quite similar to those of the preceding instances. However, the *khaḍga-bandha* is not shown here. This image bears some features of the Pāla sculptures of Bihar. But the physiognomy of the figure of the deity and the attendants are different from those of Bihar sculptures, as it appears. However, it can be placed, stylistically in *c.* A.D. 9th-10th century.

A huge image of the deity was noticed just near Gahpur. The image is about 185 cms × 110 cms and is sadly broken into two pieces in the middle. The god has two hands holding lotuses. Below the god, seven horses and a wheel are noticed. Just below the deity the figure of Aruṇa is shown. To the right Daṇḍa and to the left of the figure of the deity Piṅgala, flanked by Chāyā and Rājñī respectively, are shown. Ūshā and Pratyūshā are also depicted.[200] At Urvaśī, a rock-cut image of the deity is seen with usual features.

Two beautiful but sadly mutilated sculptures are noticed in the Assam State Museum. The upper portion of the first image, the figure of the deity and the attendants and consorts are completely gone. Only the nicely carved seven horses and the wheel of the *ratha* are seen. Likewise the second image is also unfortunately mutilated. Only the *ratha* and the seven horses are intact. The upper portion of the sculpture is completely gone. It had been lying outside the Khādi Board Office, Guwahati, and subsequently it has been taken to the museum. Both the images, it appears, were of medium size and are datable to *c.* A.D. 11th century or so.

1. *Sthānaka Variety* : (b) *without ratha* : The *sthānaka* image of Sūrya without *ratha* found in Assam are not many. At Tezpur, a small image of Sūrya of this variety has been noticed. Now it is in Cole Park. It is carved in the middle of a huge *śirapaṭṭi* of a temple along with the images of Śiva, Brahmā[201] and some other figures of divinities which cannot be precisely identified. The image of the deity is in the *sama pādasthānaka* attitude and holds two *padmas* with both the hands in the conventional way. The *alaṁkāras* of the deity is not visible as the image is weathered. However, the *kirīṭamukuṭa* on his head can be noticed. The *avyaṅga* worn by the deity is also, to some extent, clear. Whether the deity wears a coat of mail (*kāñchuka*) is not known. But the pair of boots worn by the deity is clear. The male attendants standing on either side of the deity can easily be identified with Piṅgala and Daṇḍa. Like the deity both of them stands on *padmas*. The figures of Aruṇa, consorts, Ūshā

and Pratyūshā, and the *ratha* are absent in the image. The sculptural style of the icon leads us to infer that the image can be placed in *c.* A.D. 10th century.

At Urvaśī two rock-cut images of the deity of a medium size have been noticed. The first image stands in the usual attitude on two *padmas* in common style. Amongst the *alaṁkāras* that deck the person of the deity a *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*, *keyūras* and the *avyaṅga* can be seen. Two attendant female figures are seen on either side of the deity. They can be taken as the consorts of the deity. The figures of Daṇḍa and Piṅgala, depicted frequently, and Ushā and Pratyūshā, depicted irregularly in Sūrya images, are omitted here. The *ratha* is also excluded here. The *pīṭha* of the deity may be of a *padma*.

The second image from the place also stands in the same *sthānaka* attitude on a *padma* like the former, and holds two *padmas*. The deity is attended to by two divine figures. They have lost their precise indentity due to the effect of the flood water of the Brahmaputra. If they are male ones, they can be taken as Piṅgala and Daṇḍa, and if they can be identified as female figures, they are Nikshubhā and Rājñī the consorts of Sūryadeva. The *alaṁkāras* and *vastras* of the deity are worn out. The *ratha* is not seen.

B.K. Barua[202] has reproduced a photograph on an image of Sūrya the provenance of which is not known. Here the deity is made to stand in the *samabhaṅga* attitude and to carry *pūrṇa-vikaśita-padma* with stalks. He seems to wear an *uttarīyavastra*. The long boots, worn by the god, are clear. Nikshubhā and Rājñī attend upon the lord from both sides and they bear a *chowri* each. The sculpture is presented without the conventional *ratha* of the deity.

Stylistically, the present image appears to date to *c.* A.D. 9th century. This image has a resemblance with the Sūrya one, found in a field near Sundia in the 24 Parganas district in West Bengal.[203] The present image, reproduced by Barua, offers some amount of similarity also to the image of Sūrya from Śukreśvara described already.

At Bāmunī hill, Tezpur, we noticed a small but interesting image of Sūrya which is sculptured in a stone slab. Here the deity is made to stand in the *samapāda-sthānaka* attitude on a *pūrṇa-vikaśita-kamala* and carry two *padmas*. The image of the deity wears the usual *alaṁkāras*. Probably he wears a pair of boots. There are three miniature male figures, each depicted separately. All of them stand to the left of the deity and they are separated each by a *laghu-staṁbha* (small pillar). All of them are two-handed, carrying *padma* in each hand. But these figures cannot be precisely indentified. To the right of the figure of the deity another figure is there representing Brahmā in the same slab of stone.

In this case, Sūrya is depicted without *ratha*. This type of Sūrya image along with the figures of Brahmā and other unidentified divinities are rare. Stylistically, this piece of sculpture may belong to *c.* A.D. 10th century. At Urvaśī also an image of god is noticed on a rock without *ratha*.

The last image of the *sthānaka* variety is a small bronze icon of the deity which hails from Kāhilipārā (Narakāsur hill) near Guwahati. It is a *samapada-sthānaka-mūrti*. It holds two *padmās* in both hands. However, the *padma*, held in the right hand, is broken. It wears the usual *alaṁkaras* and a pair of boots. Whether the deity wears the *udīcyaveśa*, *i.e.* a coat of mail, is not known. The peculiarity of the image lies in that here no attendant is shown. Neither Piṅgala and Daṇḍa nor the consorts of the deity are depicted in this image. The figures of Aruṇa and the *ratha* are also marked absent. The deity stands on a simple *pīṭha*. Behind the head of the deity a *prabhāmaṇḍala* is shown. Another singularity of the image is marked. The *kaṭivastra* of the deity reaching the ankles spreads outwards horizontally over the knees.[204] Stylistically, it may be assigned to *c*. A.D. 8th century.

2. *Āsana variety* : In Assam like the other parts of India, compared to the *sthānaka* variety of the images of Sūrya, the *āsana* variety is fewer in number.

The first image of this variety hails from a village, named Daparvatiā, about two miles from Tezpur as the crow flies. This miniature image occurs in the *dvāraśirapaṭṭi* (lintel of a door frame) of a ruined temple. Here the deity is made to sit in the *utkaṭikāsana* attitude. Both the hands of the deity hold two *padmas* in the usual way. He is attended by Piṅgala and Daṇḍa, who are to the right and left of him. They are seated. The consorts of the deity and Aruṇa are not depicted. The *ratha* and the horses are also left undepicted. The details of the image are lost due to weathering.

R.D. Banerjea[205] who is supported by others, has opined that the whole sculpture of the *dvāra* belonged to the same period as the great school of sculpture which existed at Pātaliputra and Vārānaśī (Benāras) in A.D. 5th and 6th century. Therefore, after the establishment of the date of the *dvāra*, it has become easier on our part to say that the present Sūrya image, which belongs to the late Gupta period (A.D. 5th-6th century) is the earliest of all the Sūrya images discovered so far in Assam.

The present image is, to some extent, comparable with the Sūrya image of Junāgarh *Toraṇa*[206] In both the cases, we find that the deity is made to sit in the same attitude, *i.e.*, *utkaṭikāsana*. Both the images hold *padmas* in the same way. But the other details of the Junāgarh image are different from those of ours.

The provenance of the next image is Śadiyā. Here the figure of the deity is seated in *padmāsana* (?) in the *ratha*. It holds two *padmas* in the hands. It wears a short *mukuṭa* and *kuṇḍalas*. Other *alaṁkāras* and *vastras* are quite indistinct. In front of the deity Aruṇa sits holding the reins of the seven horses depicted below in a galloping posture. The *cakra* of the *ratha* is shown. The image is badly weathered. As such, we have to face some difficulty in the proper assignment of the age of this icon. However, the style of the icon seems to belong to the pre-Āhom period.[207]

The last image for our discussion is noticed at Mahāmāya-thān, Kārbi-Ānglong district. It is carved out of a small piece of granite rock. The same block of rock carries the image of Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva (?) also. The image under question is two-handed. Both the hands hold *padmas* in the conventional style. The deity is seated in the *padmāsana* attitude. The *āsana* (seat) of the god is not clear. An indistinct figure is marked below the *āsana* of the deity. But it is certain that the *ratha* with the horses are not depicted here. The image is carved in a shallow *khaṭṭaka* on a slab of stone, which carries on its other three sides the images of different gods referred to already. The image is weathered, yet looking at the style of execution, the icon may be placed some-time in A.D. 9th-10th century.

ĀDITYAS : The Ādityas are a very ancient class of deities in India, as they are praised in the *Vedas*.[208] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and some later texts refer to the Ādityas.[209]

At the foot of the Śrī Sūryapāhār some rock-cut sculptures are seen. At the site is seen a round stone, measuring 138 cms. in circumference, carrying twelve Ādityas. It may be also called an *Āditya-cakra*. It is very badly weathered. The quality of the stone is also bad. The sculpture is within a circle and the central figure which is within a circle is rimmed with another embossed circle. The central figure is a male figure in seated posture. It has four hands and four heads. Objects held in the hands cannot be recognized. The fourth head which is supposed to be on the back side is not visible. There is a trace of a *vāhana* below the seat of the deity which can somehow be taken as a swan. This figure may be of Kāśyapa, who is often called Prajāpati or creater of beings—Brahmā.[210] Around this figure there are twelve seated miniature figures. They may be identified with the twelve Ādityas : Dhātṛi, Mitra, Āryaman, Rudra, Varuṇa, Sūrya, Bhaga, Vivasvān, Pūshan, Savitṛi, Tvaṣṭṛ and Vishṇu.[211] All these figures are so worn out that their proper identities are lost. Thus, the whole piece of sculpture represent twelve Ādityas in the border with their father Kāśyapa, the husband of Aditi, in the centre. On stylistic ground, this sculpture of Ādityas can be placed in *c*. A.D. 10th century. Such type of sculpture is very rare in Assam and this is the only piece of its kind. This piece of *Āditya-cakra* is quite similar to the piece of *Navagraha-cakra* from Khiching reproduced by Banerjea,[212] from stylistic point of view though their themes are quite different.

So far we have not come across any Navagraha (nine planets) panel or image of Navagrahas. The huge *dvāra-śirapaṭṭi* at Cole Park, Tezpur, carrying the figure of Sūrya in the middle, appears to bear a few figures of *grahas* on either side. But their representations are so confusing that it is hazardous to identify them as grahas. R.D. Banerji is also of the same opinion.[213] A broken type of *dvāra-śirapaṭṭi* carrying some *graha* figures is noticed at Mikirāti. R.M. Nath[214] had illustrated a photograph of two peculiar images from Śingri. He has identified these two figures with Rāhu and Ketu. Here one figure is in a standing posture, putting its left hand on the left thigh, while the right hand is made to hold some objects. The figure seems to be lame. According to the *Aṁśumadbhedāgama*,[215] the figure of Śanigraha should be somewhat lame. But why this figure is shown as lame is not known. This figure is identified by Nath with Rāhu. The adjacent figure separated by a *laghustambha* is shown in the *añjali-hasta* pose. The lower portion of this figure is like the tail of a snake. Below this the figure of a human head, upright with the face open and having a terrible look is depicted. This figure may be identified as Ketu. This figure is represented almost like the figure of Ketu, illustrated by Banerjea,[216] from a Navagraha panel from Bengal. But the image of Rāhu from Śingri seems to be quite different from the image of Rāhu illustrated by Banerjea. Again the image of Rāhu illustrated by Rao[217] is quite different from ours. Rather, that image is somewhat similar to the image of Ketu from Śingri.

The worship of Navagrahas was popular in the days of Āhom kings also. The Navagraha temple built in the late Āhom period houses nine images of these *grahas*. However, they are aniconic represetation. They look like Śivaliṅgas.[218]

III. *Śaiva Images*

NAṬARĀJA : The most popular symbol of Śiva is the *liṅga* or *phallus*, but his images are also not uncommon. In the first place, we may mention the images of Śiva in dancing attitude. The *nṛtyamūrtis* of Śiva are very common in South India; but they are also not unknown in the other regions of India. The iconographic descriptions of an image of Naṭarāja are found in the *Matsya-purāṇa*,[219] *Viṣṇudharmōttara*,[220] *Uttara-kāmikāgama*,[221] *Bharata's-Naṭyasāstra*,[222] *Aṁsumadbhēdāgama*,[223] *Śilparatna*[224] and *Pūrva-karaṇāgama*.[225]

A few images of this aspect of Śiva have been noticed in this region. The first image was found on the bank of the Brahmaputra near Guwahati. Now, it is in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. The image (82 cms × 66 cms) is carved out of a round block of granite. Here, the deity is seen dancing on the back of Nandi. The deity has ten hands. The *āyudhas* of the hands are clockwise: broken, held in *gajahasta*, holding *triśūla*, *bāṇa*, *daṇḍa*, *kheṭaka*, *khaḍga*, *aksha-sūtra*, *sarpa*, an unidentified *āyudha* which is broken, probably held in *abhaya* or *varada mudrā*. The body of the deity is in *atibhaṅga* pose. The right leg is raised in the dancing pose, while the left is on the back of Nandi. The face of the figure of the deity is half-mutilated. It has a *jaṭā* on the head. The usual *aḷaṁkāras* deck the body of the deity. An *uttarīya* is seen on the body; the ends of it are distinctly seen flying in the air on both sides of the person of the deity. The *paridhāna* is a *dhōti*. Nandi, the *vāhana* of the deity, looks at his lord with his head turned upwards out of joy. Neither the attendant nor the consort of the deity is present in the scene. The sculpture is within an embossed circle, and not in a long *śilāpaṭṭa* or *pīṭhikā*, having two Vidyādharas and the Kīrttimukha, found usually in such iconographic motif. Stylistically, the icon may belong to *c*. A.D. 10th-11th century.

Naṭarājamūrtis of this type are found in Bengal as well as in Orissa. Both the

Naṭarajamūrtis from Bengal, illustrated by Bhattasali,[226] are similar to our image. Both of them are ten-handed (*daśabhujā*) and in both the cases Śiva dances on the *vāhana*, Nandi, who looks at his master turning his head upwards out of joy as in our image. But the accessory figures, seen in those two sculptures are omitted in this image under review. Panigrahi[227] has reproduced an image of Naṭarāja from Orissa, which is more similar to our image. In that image also the deity dances on Nandi, who looks upwards, and the scene is within a circle, as in our case. An image (measuring 64 cms × 46 cms) of the deity is seen along with the image of Kārttikeya and Nṛtya Gaṇapati on a slab of granite stone in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. Here Śiva is shown in the dancing pose on the *vāhana*, Nandi who is looking at his master turning his neck upwards. The deity is ten handed. The *āyudhas* are not quite clear. However, it appears that the hands hold the usual *āyudhas* in the usual pose. Stylistically, the sculpture may be placed in *c.* A.D. 9th century. Another image of Naṭarāja (64 cms × 46 cms) with one head and six hands, was noticed in the ruins of Bāmuni hill, Tezpur.[228] Now, the image is not seen in the place. Probably, it is already lifted alongwith the image of Bhairava and a beautiful stele of an image by somebody.

We see that the theme of the icons of Naṭarāja found in Assam, Bengal and Orissa is one. The image of Naṭarāja showing the figure of the god on the *vāhana* are commonly found in eastern India. In South India the deity dances on an Apasmāra-puruṣa, an *asura* (demon). In some of the Orissan images of this aspect of the deity and most of the images seen in northen India and the central region, Nandi is also depicted. Sivaramamurti[229] has rightly remarked, "the form of Naṭeśa betrays distinctive differences in different geographical areas, dancing four-armed on Apasmāra dwarf in South India,dancing multi armed in the *catura* or *lalita* pose on the ground on lotus pedestal, sometimes with the bull beside him, in the central area, and dancing multi armed, in *catura* or *lalita* pose on the bull in the eastern School". The South Indian Naṭarājamūrtis, generally, are represented with only four hands, while the North Indian, and specially, the Western Indian Naṭarājamūrtis are depicted with many arms. However, at Madan kāmdev Parvat a four-armed image of Nataraja image (Stone) is noticed.

MAHEŚA: The image of Maheśa, one aspect of the lord Śiva, is not common. Maheśamūrti, as mentioned in the *Śaivāgamas*,[230] is the fully manifested supreme Śiva and is the cause of *sṛṣṭi* (creation), *pālana* (protection) and *saṁhāra* (destruction). The figure of the deity is described in the *Viṣṇudharmōttara*[231] and the *Suprabhedāgama*.[232]

One icon of the god is in the campus of the Assam State Museum, Guwahati. It was found in Guwahati. The image is carved from a block of granite, 167 cms. high. The image is within a big circle. Here the deity is seated on a *pūrṇavikaśita-padma* of which only six petals are extant. He is seated in *vajrāsana*,[233] *i.e.*, in the meditational pose with his legs firmly locked and both soles exposed to the view. The god has five heads, the face of four of which alone are visible, and ten hands. We have already said that the details of the image are beyond recognition. However, we have tried to identify the *āyudhas* and *mudrās* held in the hands and they are clockwise : *jñānamudrā* (?), palm resting on the right knee and exhibiting *varadamudrā*, an unidentified *āyudha*, *śūla*, *jñānamudrā* (?), palm resting on the left knee while exhibiting *varadamudrā*. Probably, both the hands, which are held in *varadamudrā*, hold some *āyudhas* which cannot be precisely identified. His heads bear *jaṭāmukuṭa*. Nandi, the *vāhana*, is depicted below the *āsana*.

According to the texts mentioned above, Maheśa should have five heads, the faces of four of which alone should be visible. He should have two legs and ten hands, two of his hands are to be held in *varada* and *abhaya mudrās* respectively while the remaining hands carry the *āyudhas* of Śiva.[234] We see that most of the textual conditions tally with the details of the image. The only difference, to be marked, is that our image does not exhibit any *abhayamudrā* with any hand. Whether the hands kept on the chest, are at all, in *varada mudrā* and *abhaya mudrā*, is not clear. The remaining *āyudhas* held by the other hands, must be the usual *āyudhas* of Siva. Therefore, we find reasons to identify the image with Maheśa.

But this piece of icon can be well compared with the image of Sadāśiva, from Bengal, illustrated by Banerjea.[235] The sitting postures on the *padma* of both the icons are quite alike. Like our image, the image from Bengal also has ten hands of which two hands are on the chest forming unidentified *mudrās*,[236] two hands rest on knees in *varada-mudrā*, and the remaining hands hold various usual *āyudhas* of Śiva, which are not properly identifiable. The only difference is that unlike our image, that from Bengal has three heads for which probably Banerjea has preferred to identify it with Sadāśiva and not with Maheśa. In fact, there is little difference between the Sadāśiva aspect and the Maheśa aspect of Śiva in iconographical representations.[237]

Another image of the deity has been preserved in the same museum. It was discovered at Uzanbazar, Guwahati. The material on which the image is sculptured is a block of sandstone. Here the deity is made to sit on a pericarp of a full blown lotus. The god sits in *yogāsana* attitude. He has five heads of which only four are visible and ten hands. Both the front hands are seen to form *jñānamudrā* on the chest and not to form *ahhaya* and *varada mudrās* said by Choudhury.[238] The objects, held in the hands are not distinct, but, with careful observation two of them can be ascertained. One is *śūla* in one of the right hands and the other is *ankuśa* in one of those on the left. Another right hand probably wields a *khaḍga*. The *jaṭāmukuṭas* on the heads of the deity are quite clear. The *yajñopavīta* is also clearly depicted. Nandi is shown below the deity.

LAKULĪŚA : Lakulīśa, the 28th *avatāra* of Śiva, according to some *Purāṇas*, such as the *Vāyupurāṇa*[239] and *Liṅgapurāṇa*,[240] was the systematiser or orgainser of the Pāśupata doctrine.

In Assam images of Lakulīśa are extremely rare. Only two miniature images of the deity have been found in the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley. The image of the deity is found carved in the middle of the *Śirapaṭṭi* of the famous *dvāra* of a ruined temple at Daparvatiā, near Tezpur. Here, the deity is seated in the *utkaṭikāsana* pose, *i.e.*, the crossed legs are tied around with a *yogapaṭṭa*, the knees being necessarily held aloft. Both the hands of the god are shown in *dharma-cakrapravartana-mudrā*. A *lakuṭa* is seen in between his body and the left arm. It leans on his shoulder. The *jaṭā* on the head of the deity is well-depicted, so also the erect penis (liṅga). Other *alaṁkāras* worn by the deity are not visible. On each side of the deity a female attendant is seen in the *āliḍha* posture and in the *añjali-hasta* pose. As the date of the *dvāra*, wherein this image is carved, is placed in the late Gupta period, in A.D. 6th century, the image in question will also go with the same, as far as the date is concerned. Panigrahi[241] has illustrated an image of the deity from Orissa, which is quite similar to that of ours as far as the sitting posture is concerned. Like the image from Daparvatiā, the image also sits in *utkaṭikāsana*, the legs being tied with a *yogapaṭṭa* and *lakuṭa* in between his body and the left arm. Another miniature image of Lakulīśa on a *dvāraśirapaṭṭi* are in the ruins at Devasthān. It is similar to the Daparvatiā image.

UMĀ-MAHEŚVARA : The *Matsyapurāṇa*[242] is the best authority to give description of an image of Umā-Maheśvara. The *Vişhṇudharmōttara*[243] the *Rūpamaṇḍana*,[244] *etc.*, also give descriptions of Umā-Maheśvaramūrti.

As in Bengal and other parts of the country, in Assam also a good number of Umā-Maheśvaramūrti have been discovered. An image of Śiva with his consort (77 cms × 46 cms) is noticed at Baḍgaṅgā. In this image Maheśvara or Śiva is shown in the *lalitāsana* or *lalitākshepa* pose, *i.e.*, the right leg is pendent, while the left one is horizontally placed on the *padmāsana* (lotus-seat). Umā, the consort of Śiva, sits in a graceful pose on the left leg of the god keeping her right leg pendent. Her left leg is kept upright on the *āsana* (seat). Both of them are two-handed. The right hand of Śiva holds a *mātuliṅga* (citron fruit). while his left hand is thrown around the back of Umā, so as to embrace her tenderly. Umā's right hand is thrown on the shoulders of the god, while the left hand rests on her raised knee and holds a lotus-bud.

Both the figures are profusely decorated with *alaṁkāras*. The *jaṭāmukuṭa*, worn by Śiva, is well done. The *urdhava-liṅga* of Śiva is clearly visible, Umā's *jaṭāmukuṭa* (?) is also beautifully depicted. Both Umā and Śiva have a *tilaka* each on their foreheads. Below the *āsana* a human figure is shown in the *anjalihasta* pose.[245] The *vāhanas* of the divinities are not shown in this case. Behind their heads a *prābhāvalī* is arranged on the *śilāpaṭṭa*. *The śilāpaṭṭa* is not pointed and it does not carry the figures of Kīrttimukha and Vidyādharas, usually met with in other images.

The provenance of the second image is Mikirāti near Davakā. This piece of splendid sculpture carries the same theme as the former. Here the god is made to sit in the *lalitāsana* pose, as in the former case. The right leg of the deity is kept pendent and it rests on the miniature figure of the *vāhana*, depicted below the *āsana*. The left leg is horizontally placed on the *padmāsana* (lotus seat). Umā sits on his left leg. Her left leg is kept upright on the *asana*, and the right leg is kept pendent. This pendent leg touches her *vāhana* a *siṁha* (lion), depicted below the *āsana*. Śiva with his right hand holds a *mātu-liṅga*, and with his left hand touches the left breast of Umā, while embracing her lovingly. Umā keeps her right hand on the shoulders of Śiva. The left hand of the goddess rests on her raised left knee and holds a *darpaṇa* (mirror). Both the figures are decked with *alaṁkāras*. Both the figures of the divinities have a *tilaka* each on their fore-heads.

The beautiful *silāpaṭṭa* of the image carries a figure of a Kīrttimukha and two Vidyādharas. The *śilāpaṭṭa* of this image is somewhat different from the usual one. Here the peculiarity is that the breadth of the middle portion is more than that of the lower portion of the *silapaṭṭa*, and that a *trisūla* is carved in such a way that it appears to be a decorative motif and, at the same time, the usual *ayudha* of Śiva.

An exactly similar image (72 cms × 42 cms) of Umā-Maheśvara, obtained from the same place, has been preserved in the Assam state Museum. As in other two images, here also the figure of Śiva is shown with two hands and the figure of Pārvatī is shown as two-handed and seated on the left leg of the figure of Śiva. Both the figures are embracing each other. Below the figures of the divinities the *vāhanas* are shown. In fact the present image is a copy of the image from Devakā, described above.

It is observed that all the images portray the same scene. In all the cases we see that the *āsana* attitude of both the divinities and their style of holding the respective *āyudhas* are same. The only major difference is that in the former case the *vāhanas* of Śiva and Umā are not shown, but in other two cases they are represented. The minor difference is that in the first example the representations of the Kīrttimukha and two Vidyādharas are not shown. But they are figured beautifully in the *silapaṭṭas* of the second and third images. The second image from sculptural point of view, seems to be more beautiful, as the details of the image are shown clearly. It appears that on stylistic evidence the first image may be placed in the later part of A.D. 10th century and the other two images may be placed in a period not later than A.D. 11th century.

The representation of the theme of these two icons may be to some extent comparable with that of an icon of Umā-Maheśvara from Bengal.[246] The sitting style of the divinities in all these cases is same. But the difference is that in the image from Bengal Śiva is represented with four hands. In our case Śiva is represented with only two hands.

The next image comes from Rājbārī. It is of the same measurement. As in the earlier cases, here also Umā and Maheśvara are depicted as two-handed. Śiva sits here in the same way *i.e.*, in *lalitāsana* and Umā sits on the left lap of Śiva. Unlike those former cases, here she keeps her legs on the *āsana* stretching to the left. Śiva holds in his right hand a *dhuturā-puspa* morphinic in action while his left hand is gently placed on the bosom of Umā. Her right hand is thrown around the shoulder of Śiva, while her left hand holds a *darpaṇa* (mirror). Śiva's head is decked with a *jaṭāmukuṭa*, while Umā's head is decked with a *karaṇḍamukuṭa*. Her person is beautified with the common *alaṁkāras*. Below the *padmāsana*, Nandī is seen supporting the pendent leg of Śiva. A figure of siṁha is also depicted there as the *vāhana* of the goddess. The decorated *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image does not have the traditional representation of Kīrttimukha and Vidyādharas. On the strength of style, this piece of sculpture should be placed in A.D. late 10th century.

A same type of Umā-Maheśvaramūrti, where in the divinities are depicted as two-handed is noticed at Madankāndevaparvat. It is a big sized image. Here pārvatī sits in the same way on the left thigh of Śiva who embraces her with his left hand. The same type of images of Umā-Maheśvara where both the divinities are depieted as two-handed, are noticed in several places, such as those found on the way to Kāmākhyā, at Barālimarā-staranear. Tezpur, Devasthān and Deopāni. This type of Umā-Maheśvara-mūrti is as good as common in North india.

We have also come across a few icons where Śiva is figured as four-handed and Umā is figured as two-handed. The first image of this type is seen at Mahāmāyāthān. The image (26 cms × 15 cms) is carved on a piece of granite. Here the divinities are made to sit in their usual way, *i.e.* Śiva sits on a *padma* in *lalitāsana* and Umā sits on his left lap, hanging one of her legs down. Śiva with his right front-hand gently touches the chin of Umā, while he holds a *damaru* in his right back-hand. The left back-hand of the god is in the embracing style from the back of Umā, while the left fronthand holds a *trisūla* (trident) (?). The left hand of Umā holds a *darpaṇa*. A *vṛṣabha* and a *siṁha* are depicted below the *āsaṇa* in the same way as we have seen in the image from Rājbārī. The image is weathered and switten.

The next image (62 cms × 46 cms) of this type comes from Dēvasthāna, near Hojāi. Here Śiva and Umā are seated in the usual way, as observed already. The right front-hand of Śiva holds *dhuturāpushpa* (?), while the left back-hand holds a *trisūla*. The front left hand of the god is poised tenderly and touches the left bosom of Umā, while the left backhand holds a *damaru*. Umā's right hand embraces the lord, while the left hand holds a *ḍarpaṇa*. Śiva is depicted with a *jaṭa* on the head, while Umā is depicted with a *karaṇḍamukuṭa*. Her right leg, which is pendent rests on a *simha*, the *vahana* of the goddess, while the right leg of Śiva rests on Nandı depicted below the *āsana*. The faces of the divinities are partially mutilated and the *silāpaṭṭa* is broken.

Both the images from Devasthāna (Mandāngā) and Mahāmāyāthāna can, from the stylistic point of view, be placed in A.D. 8th-9th century. Another two stone images of Umā-Maheśvara depicted in the same style are noticed in the Assam State

Museum. In both the cases the lower parts are mutilated. Another image of great interest has been preserved in the said museum, that has been collected from some place near Guwahati. The block of granite (46 cm × 46 cm) on which the figures of Umā and Maheśvara are sculptured is square in shape. The whole piece of stone is divided into nine equal squares, each measuring 15 cm × 15 cm. The extreme left square at the top-most row depicts a figue of Gaṇeśa in the *āsana* attitude. The middle square of the same row portrays four Śiva-liṅgas, one upon another. The last square of the same row displays a figure of kārttikeya (a son of Śiva ; the wargod) in the *āsana* attitude. The extreme left and the extreme right squares of the middle row have four Śiva-liṅgas each after the manner of the first row. The middle square of the middle row portrays the image of Umā-Maheśvara. In the third row, the extreme left square shows the figure of Vishṇu in the *sthānaka* attitude, holding the usual *āyudhas*, the middle square depicts four human figures in the *sthānaka* posture and in the *añjali-hasta* pose, while the last square shows the figure of Sūrya in the *sthānaka* attitude. Here the figures of Umā—Maheśvara (in the middle) are depicted in the same way as we have seen in the image from Devasthān. Śiva sits in *lalitāsana* and Umā sits on his left leg. Her left leg is seen hanging down. Śiva has four hands. With his right fronthand he touches the chin of Umā, while with the right backhand he holds a *dhuturāpuṣpa*. The left back-hand of the god holds a *triṣūla*, while the left front-hand rests mildly on the left side of Uma's bosom. Umā holds with her left hand a *darpaṇa* (?), while she throws her right hand on the shoulder of Śiva to embrace the lord. The block of stone is, to some extent weather-blasted. This is really an extremely rare piece of sculpture. The representation of the theme of the whole sculpture shows that the sculptor tried to express here the supremacy of Śiva. Looking at the style, this piece of unique sculpture may roughly be assigned to *c*. A.D. 10th century.

Images of Umā Maheśvara are also noticed at Viśvanāth ghat, Budā Māyāng hill, Kāsośilā pāhār (Māyāng) and Ganeś pāhār near Chanakā (Māyāng). The image from Viśvanāthghāt shows the figures of Umā and Maheśvara in the usual style of sitting. The upper part of this sculpture is broken. The other images from the three places are all rock-cut. The image from Budā Māyāng (108 cm × 83 cm) is executed very artistically. Here both the figures of the deities are depicted in the same common style. The Kāsośilā pāhār has yielded two rock-cut images of Uma-Maheśvara in the same style. Both the images at the place occur in two different rocks. The last rock-cut image (100 cm × 61 cm) is from gaṇeś phāhār near Chanakā (Māyāng). It is a highly ornamental sculpture.[247]

HARI-HARA : The Hari-Haramūrti, representing Vishṇu and Śiva, emphasises the reconciliation between the two major cults of Vaishṇavism and Śaivism. The textual descriptions of the image of Hari-Hara are given in the *Matsya-purāṇa*[248] and *Vishṇudharmōttara*,[249] *The Vāmana-purāṇa*[250] also mentions it. The Brahmaputra

Valley has yielded only a few icons of Hari-Hara. The first image was discovered in North Guwahati. It is now in the Assam State Museum. The image (61 cm× 69 cm) is carved from a block of granite. Here the deity is seen in the *Sthānaka-Tribhaṅga* composite pose. The image presents the chracteristics of compositeness by the line of demarcation, shown between Hari and Hara. The *mukuṭa* of Hara is well-depicted by a *jaṭā*, while that of Hari by a *kirīṭa*. The four-handed image carries in its right hands the *āyudhas*, generally held by Śiva, while with the left hands it carries the *āyudhas* held by Vishṇu. They are clockwise : *ḍamaru, trisūla, gadā* and *cakra*. To the right of the deity there is a female figure in the *sthānaka* posture. The figure seems to have side tusks. It holds a *khaḍga* in the right hand. The *āyudha* of the left hand is not visible. This female figure has a *jaṭamukṭa* on its head. Similarly, another female figure is seen standing to the left of the divinity. The right hand of the figure carries a *padma*. The *āyudhas* of the left hand is not clear. Probably, they can be taken as Pārvatī (or Dūrgā ?), the consort of Śiva, and Lakshmi, the consort of Vishṇu. The right half of the *mukuṭa* of the image of the deity is slightly broken. The sculpture is well executed and is a fine illustration of the union of the two cults, Śaivism and Vaishṇavism.

The next image (61 cm×28 cm) was found at Deopānī (Fig. 32). Like the former it is also kept in the same museum. This image is carved from a block of granite. Like the North-Guwahati image, this one is also clearly divided into two equal halves by a line of demarcation between Hari and Hara. This *sanghātamūrti* (composite image) is in *samapādasthānaka* attitude. The right half of the image represents Hara, while the other half depicts Hari. This four-handed image holds in its hands clockwise : a *śaṅkha*, (broken), presumably a *gadā*, a *trisūla*, and a *akṣamālā*. The *mukuṭa*, worn by the image, is also divided. The right half represents a *jaṭāmukuṭa* while the left half represents a *kirīṭamukuṭa*. The image has an *ūrdhvaliṅga*, which is clearly seen and which seems to be in the right half of the image. At the back of the image there is an inscription.[251] In this image the consorts of Vishṇu and Śiva are absent, but they are substituted by the respective *vāhanas* of the gods. To the deity's right Śiva's vāhana and to its left Vishṇu's carrier Garuḍa are clearly depicted. The figure of Garuḍa is in the *añjalihasta* pose. The image is slightly damaged. The execution of the image is not of high order. Both the images are alike, as far as the depiction of the deity is concerned. The slight discrepancy consists in the fact that the latter has an *ūrdhvaliṅga* in the part depicting Śiva. As regards the other features of these images, we do not see the *vāhanas* in the former case, but we see the presence of the consorts. In the latter case it is just the opposite of the former. Now, we see that the artists made these icons of the deity almost in accordance with the traditional formula regarding the iconography of Hari-Hara, as prevalent in other regions of India. Rao[252] has illustrated one image from Poona which is to some extent comparable with those under review. In all the cases we find that these *saṅghātamūrtis* (composite images) of Hari-Hara are shaped in the same way. The *āyudhas*, held by the Poona image, tally with those of our image. The differences are that the image from Poona depicts the details of the *alaṁkāras*, while our images are a little weather-beaten and so all the *alaṁkāras* therein are not very clear. Secondly, the image from Poona has the consorts, *vāhanas* and *gaṇas*, while our first image has only the consorts and second image has only the *vāhanas*. Our second image has also a *ūrdhvaliṅga*, while the Poona image's liṅga is not shown. Banerjea[253] has described an image of Hari-Hara from Bihar in which the *ūrdhvaliṅga* is clearly shown and "Hara aspect is emphasised by *ūrdhvaliṅga* sign not always present in such an image."[254] It seems that this Hari-Haramurti from Bihar is more similar to that of ours than that from Poona. Another image of Hari-Hara from Deopānī is being preserved in the Assam State Museum. So far as the workmanship is concerned, this is of an inferior type. It bears some typical crude traits from which it appears that it is of a late period. But the inscription[255] incised on the back, like the former image, proves that this one may be of A.D. 9th century or so. The image bears all the characteristic features of an image of Hari-Hara except that it does not carry the figure of the consorts of Hari and Aara. At Sūrya Pāhār, an icon of Hari-Hara in the *samapāda sthānaka* attitude, along with the icons of Vishṇu and Śiva in a row, is noticed. It is badly weathered.

ARDHANĀRĪŚVARA : The story of the formation of the Ardhanārīśvara aspect of Śiva is found in the *Śiva-purāna*. Rao has given an interesting story in this connection, but he has not mentioned the source. The description of the image of Ardhanārīśvara is found in the *Aṁśumadbhedāgama*, *Śilparatna* and in some other texts.[556] The image of Ardhanārīśvara in Assam is very rare. An image of this aspect of Śiva was found at Devasthan. The mutilated condition of the image makes it difficult to give a detailed description of the deity. It was noticed by R.N. Nath on the centre of a lintel of a ruined temple at the place. Here the left half of the image was shown as representing Śiva, while the right half with a breast as that of Gaurī. The respective *vāhanas*, i.e. a bull and a lion were noticed below the feet of the god and the goddess. Two figures of Vidyādhāras were noticed above the composite image.[257] But now the image is not seen at the place. P.C. Choudhury[258] is of the opinion that the specimen indicates the influence of Tantrik-Buddhist faith. But, it seems, such faith was not contributory in giving the shape of this image. For, the iconography of Ardhanārīśvara, however, was evolved at a fairly early period and sculptural evidence regarding the existence of such motifs in Northern India as early as the Kushāna and Gupta period,[259] and in many case, the image of Ardhanārīśvara have been found in places, where Tantrik-Buddhist faith did not exist.

BHAIRAVA : Bhairava is an *ūgra* form of Śiva. Texts like the *Vishṇudharmottara*,[260] *Rūpamaṇḍana*,[261] *Rudrayāmala*,[262] *etc*. give the iconographic descriptions of this deity. The first is a rock-cut image and it hails from Kāmākhyā. It is a four-handed image. Here the deity is in the *tribhaṅgasthānaka* composite attitude on a prostrate human body (*prētāsana*). His legs are straddling. The right front-hand of the deity holds a *śūla* while the right backhands hold a *triśūla*. He holds an *aṅkuśa* with his left backhand and a *kāpāla* with his left front-hand. The face of the deity is grim. He has big eyes, wide nostrils, a moustache, a beard and side-tusks. His lips are parted in a horrible smile. His hair flies up like flames. The *tundila* (pot-bellied) trait of the deity is quite clear. To the right of the deity a human figure is seen in the *sthānaka* attitude and in the *añjlihasta* pose. This figure is very crude. The dog, the *vāhana* of the deity, as depicted normally in the South Indian Bhairava-mūrtis, is absent here. Probably it will be safe to place it in A.D. 8th-9th century, on stylistic grounds. None of the images of the deity reproduced by Rao,[263] Banerjea[264] Bhattasali[265] are fit for comparison with the image in question, simply because, the present image, unlike the other ones, stands on a prostrated human figure putting his legs apart. Of course, the grim appearance of our image is comparable with theirs. However, one image, illustrated by Bhattasali,[266] has a beard and a moustache like that of ours. The moustached images of the deity are also reported from Ahār (Rajasthan),[267] Kumaon region (U.P.)[268] and Vegmeti valley (Nepal).[269] The second image of Bhairava is peculiar. It is noticed at Madana-Kāmadeva-parvat (wrongly named)[270] near Chāriāli. The image (92 cm × 62 cm) is sculptured in a block of granite. Here Śiva is depicted as Nṛtya-Bhairava, *i.e.* Bhairava in dancing posture. The *pīṭha* of the deity is quite simple. This four-handed deity holds in his right front-hand a *damaru*, in the right back-hand a *trisūla*, in the left back-hand a *padma*, and in the left front-hand an unidentified *āyudha*, which is partially broken. The *jaṭāmukuṭa* and the *kaṭisutra* consisting of *muṇḍas* worn by the deity, are clearly depicted. The right leg of the deity rises up slighty, but at the same time it touches the *pīṭha* with the toe. The left leg is bent slightly in a dancing pose. This leg bears the weight of the body of the god. Below the *pīṭha* a bull is shown. The image is weather-beaten. Though the artistic execution is not of a very high order, yet the image has a character of its own. In point of style we should consider it to be a sculpture of *c.* A.D. 9th century. Recently the Assam State Museum has acquired an image of Bhairava measuring 50 cm. in height, from Hengrābārī, Dispur, near Guwahati (Fig. 42). It is sculptured on a block of granite. Here the deity has the *sthānaka* attitude, with two hands holding a *khaḍga* and a *kāpāla*. The god looks terrible with big eyes and side tusks. He has a beard. The *muṇḍamalā*, worn by him, is quite prominent. The lower portion of the image is completely gone. There are another two images of the deity in the museum. One figure of the god stands on a prostrate human figure. It holds a *khaḍga* and a *kāpāla* (?) in the hands. The face of the figure is mutilated. The body of the figure is well ornamented and dressed. But the god is crowned with a *kirīṭamukaṭa*, uncommon feature, and he does not wear a *muṇḍamālā*. There are two *laghustambhas* on either side of the deity. The next image of the god is, it seems, in the dancing posture like the image of Nṛtya-Bhairava from Madana-kāmadeva-parvat. Here the deity is made to dance on a prostrate human figure which is partially broken. The god has four hands. The *āyudhas* are not clear. It seems, the upper right hand holds a *khaḍga*, while the lower right hand holds a *kāpāla*. It is not possible to identify the other objects in the other two hands, as they are mutilated or weather-blasted. The eyes of the god are big. He has side tusks, and bulky belly like the other images, described above. The *muṇḍamālā* worn by the god, is visible. On either side of the figure there is a *laghustambha*. There is a report of another image of the god at *Kāmākhyā*.[271] It was an eight-handed image. But we could not find out the image in the place. However, near the motorstand a two-armed sthanaka image is found carved on a block of stone. The figure, with its right hand, holds a *tridaṇḍa* while with the left hand a pot (?) on the chest. A long *muṇḍamālā* on the body of the figure is clearly noticed. In the *bhogamaṇḍapa* of the Kāmākhyā temple also is seen an image of Bhairava in the same Pre Āhom style. This is quite similar to the former image. Under the long tin shed outside the Assam State Museum, there is an image of Bhairava holding a *Khaḍga* and standing on a postrate human figure. Another figure of the duty is noticed in the same place. The *pitha* of the image is broken. In the ruins of Bāmuni hill, Tezpur, an image of Bhairava in the sthānaka attitude is noticed. It is almost of the same type. At Kānāibarasī a four-handed image of the deity is seen. It is under thick vermillion and is partially mutilated. The terible look is well depicted here.

AGHORA : Like Bhairava, Aghora is also an *ugra* (horrific) aspect of Śiva. The image of this form of Śiva is not commonly met with. Authorities like the *Liṅgāpurāṇa*,[272] *Karaṇāgama*,[273] *Śivatatvaratnākara*,[274] *etc*. inculde the iconographical details of Aghōra.[275] A solitary image of this deity has been noticed at Deul-Gōvinda, North-Guwahati. The image is carved out of a block of granite. It is a four-handed image of the deity in the *sthānaka* attitude. Here the deity is shown as holding a long *triśūla* with his right front and the let back-hands. The right back-hands a *daṇḍa*, while the left front-hand holds a *kāpāla*. The deity places his right leg firmly on the *pīṭha* and left leg loosely on a *padma*. The right leg bears the whole weight of the body of the deity. The *alaṁkāras* that deck the person of the deity are : *jaṭāmukuṭa, kuṇḍalas, hāras, keyūras, valayas, muṇḍamālā, upavīta and nūpuras. A kaṭimekhalā* seems to go around his waist. The facial appearance of the deity suggests the aspect of horror. The *triśūla*, held by the image rises up in 45° (degree) from the *pīṭha* and the upper part of the same touches the left shoulder of the deity. Above the *triśūla* a miniature human figure is visible. The *muṇḍamālā*, worn by the the deity, is very prominent and it adds the uncanny feature to the terrible-looking deity. The *triśūla* is held in such a pose that one would say that the deity is in an angry mood to attack somebody. The standing posture of the deity may be called as *ālīḍha*. Two attendants is noticed in this icon of Aghora. Above the deity a flying figure (*gandharva*) is seen. The image is crude and weatherworn. However, from its characteristic features, it can be said that the image should date somewhere in A.D. 8th or 9th century. The eight-handed image of the deity from Bengal, illustrated by Bhattasali,[276] is somewhat different from ours. However, the two images of the deity, reproduced by Rao,[277] have a good deal of resemblance with ours. Though they have more than four hands each, yet the the *sthānaka* posture and the style of holding the *triśūla* and wearing the *muṇḍamālā* on the person of these images are quite similar to that of the image under review.

GAJĀSURASAṀHĀRA-TRIPURĀNTAKA : A peculiar image of an *ugra* aspect of Śiva (Fig. 41) is preserved in the Assam State Museum.[278] It was discovered at Numalīgarh (Deoparvat). The image, sculptured on a sandstone, is 92 cm in height. It is quite possible that the image was half-done; and above that, it is badly weather-exposed. Here the deity stands on the left leg. The right leg rises upto the thigh level of the left leg in *nṛtya* (dancing) pose. The deity is endowed with only four hands. The image is so weathered that it has become almost impossible to identify the *āyudhas*. The left front-hand holds a *dhanu*, which is distinct. The back-hands rise up and they might hold the skin of the elephant behind the head of the deity, like a *prabhāvalī*, as in the case of Gajāsura-samhāramūrti. The *āyudha* of the right front-hand is not at all clear. The portion of the body of the deity, right from the waist to the head, is bent (probably to-maintain the balance of the body, while dancing). Most of the *alaṁkāras* that adorn the body of the deity are, however, clear. They are : *jaṭāmukuṭa, patra-kuṇḍalas, hāras, keyūras*. The *pīṭha* on which the deity dances is not clear. But our close observation leads us to conclude that it is a *Gajamuṇḍa* (elephat head). From the stylistic point of view, this image may date 9th century or so. Now, it poses a problem with regard to the identification of the image. B.K. Barua[279] and R.M. Nath[280] have identified it with Tripurārī. P.D Choudhury[281] identifies it as Gajāsurasamhāramūrti. The identification by Barua and and Nath is not correct, as the description of the image shows. We can agee with Choudhury, but not fully. The dancing pose of this image has striking similarity with that of Gajāsurasaṁhāramūrtis, reproduced by Rao[282] and Banerjea.[283] But the main difference is that the image under review holds a *dhanu* unlike other images. Barua says that the image in question holds a *dhanu and bāṇa*. But our close observation has failed to notice the *bāṇa*, held by the deity. The *dhanu* and *bāṇa* are invariable *āyudhas* of a Tripurāntakamūrti, according to the *Aṁsumadbhedāgama*[284] *and Uttarakāmikāgama.*[285] Though our image holds a *dhanu* and supposing, in addition a *bāṇā* also, yet the *ṇrtya* (dancing) pose is quite contrary to any Tripurāntakamūrti. A *ratha* (chariot) is represented in a Tripurāntakamūrti. But our image does not have this feature. None of the Tripurāntakamūrtis, illustrated by Rao,[286] can be compared with ours. On the other hand, *dhanu* and *bāṇa* are not mentioned in the *Aṁsumadbhedāgama*,[287] *Śilparatna*[288] and other *Śaivāgamas*[289] which describe the Gajāsurasaṁhāramūrti, as the āyudhas of Gajāsurasaṁhāramūrti. The same texts instruct that an image of Gajāsurasaṁhāra should be either four-handed or eight-handed. But Rao[290] has reproduced one image of this deity of the Hoysala style, belonging to about A.D. 12th century, which holds a *dhanu* and a *bāṇa* in two of its hands. Probably, these two *āyudhas* are placed in them, in addition to other *āyudhas*, prescribed by the texts, simply because the image is sixteen-handed. It shows that the sculptors sometimes did not follow the injunctions, enjoined in texts. Therefore, our observation is that the image under review possesses features of both the aspects of Śiva. To sum up, our surmise is that the present image is a representation of Gajāsurasmhāra-cum-Tripurāntakamūrti, a *sanghātamūrti* (Composite image) of Śiva, a rare icon.

Sivaramamurti has rightly remarked that "the combination of Gajāntaka and Andhakāntaka represents the North Indian tradition in a way it is appropriate, as according to the story of the *Varāha-Purāna*, Gajāsura was first overcome by Śiva who used the hide of the animal as an upper garment before he attacked Andhakāsura. The two concepts have, therefore, been amalgamated into one".[291] The compositeness is thus, in accordance with North India tradition. Therefore, it is not unlikely that slightly modifying this formula some sculptor in Kāmrūp chiselled cut this piece of work of art.

Some more images of Śiva in different forms are reported. K.N. Dikshit noticed a ten-armed Śiva on a stone slab in a private residence at Guwahati, and another four-armed Śiva image holding a *damaru*, *triśūla*, *gadā* and *akshamālā* in its hands flanked by the figures of female attendants.[292] In the ruins of Deopāṇī an image of Śiva with two hands was noticed by Nath. The attributes of the god are not clear.[293] It is reported that a figure of a god seated on a bull noticed at Mikir-Āti probably represented Śiva.[294] At Gāchtal a figure of the deity was noticed in 'Yoga' with four hands along with the worshipping figures of the Gaṇas.[295] A figure of the deity standing with *akshamālā* in the right hand and *triśūla* in the left hand on *dvārasākhā* and *śirapatti* were noticed at Gāchtal.[296] A figure of Śiva as Ṣūlapāṇī in *abhyaṅga* pose flanked by two female attendants, one holding *chowri* and the other standing with bent knees on the back of an elephant in *añjali-hasta* pose was seen at Ākāśīgaṅgā.[297] A mutilated figure of the god crowned with *jāṭamukuṭa* holding a *triśūla* in one of the hands is in the Assam State Museum. At Urvaśī a seated cross-legged icon of the god is noticed. The god in his four hands holds clock wise : (from upper left) unidentified *āyudha*, (*broken*), *akshamālā* on the chest and *triśula*. Bellow this rock-cut image of Nandi, the bull vehicle, and a human figure are in *añjalihasta* pose and *alīdha* attitude. Just near this figure of Śiva, on another rock a seated, crosslegged four-handed male figure of some deity is noticed. The figure holds in its hands clockwise : *paraśu*, *abhayamudrā*, *varada* resting on the left knee and *akshamālā*. Below the deity instead of showing the *vāhana*, a small *padma* is shown. As in the former images, in this image also we find a *jaṭāmukuṭa* on the head of the deity. The presence of a *padma* has led us into confusion with regard to the precise identity of the icon. The most beautiful broken image of Śiva comes from Uzan bazar, Guwahati. The sadly mutilated image has been lying on the road side in front of a private residence, along with some other chiselled stone piece, including two cannons of the Āhom period. Their splendid sculpture bearing (11th—12th century art style has been sadly broken into two pieces. From the remnants, it is clear that the deity was depicted in yogāsana. The torso portion of the body, leaving no trace of the four hands, is lying by the side of the *adhiṣthāna* showing Nandī.

Recently, the Assam State Museum authority has collected a sadly mutilated image of Śiva from Majbat Tea Estate. The big piece is broken so badly that only beautifully done jaṭā and the upper part of the nicely executed *śilāpatta* are noticed. Stylistically, this pice of work of art can be placed in A.D. 10th—11th century. A four-armed Śiva in *sthānaka* attitude is noticed at Barālimārā Satra near Tezpur. The image is badly weathered. Except the trace of *triśūla* held by the deity, no details can be traced. A similar four-armed figure of the deity in *sthānaka* attitude is seen preserved under a long tin-shed just out-side the Assam State Museum along with other mutilated stone images. Here also except the *trisula* no details can be traced. 'The face of the figure is badly weathered. Another broken piece of sculpture under the same tin-shed, shows the sadly mutilated figure of Śiva. Only the face of the deity with the beautifully done *jaṭā* and the upper portion of the *triśūla* are remnant. The major portion of the sculpture is broken and gone. Stylislically, all these pieces of sculptures belong to *c.* A.D. 8th—9th century or so. Figures of Śiva are noticed at Madan-Kāmdev Parvat (Fig. 70) and Sri-Sūrya Pahar (Fig. 34). A seated figure of the deity is noticed at Deulgovinda, North-Guwahati. It is fourhanded. The right upper hand holds a *triśūla*. The object of the other upper hand is not clear. The lower hands are seen on the lap of the god who is in *Yogāsana* posture. Another two-handed seated bulky figure of Śiva is noticed in the Assam State Museum. It is depicted in a terracotta plaque. Below the deity Nandī is figured. The plaque was brought from Bhaitbārī, Goalpara. In the same museum, another seated figure of the deity in noticed in a mutilated condition.

GANEŚA : The description of the image of Gaṇeśa is found in the *Bṛhat-saṁhita*,[298] *Matsya-purāna*,[299] *Vaikhānasāgama*,[300] *Vishṇudharmōttara*,[301] *Aṁsumadbhēdāgama*,[302] *Utturakāmikāgama*,[303] *Suprabhēdāgama*,[304] *Rūpamaṇḍana*[305] and many other texts. No other god is so popular in Assam as Gaṇeśa. His images are found in an overwhelming number in all the corners of the Brahmaputra Valley. Majority of the images depicts the deity in the āsana pose. A few images of Gaṇeśa have been found where the deity is depicted in the dancing pose. They will be described under separate heading. Images depicting the deity in the *sthānaka* posture are not noticed so far.

The extant image of Gaṇeśa found in this region, occurs in three ways :

(a) On the *dvāra-śirapaṭṭī* (lintel)
(b) On the *bhiṭṭis* (walls) of temples of the Āhom period, and
(c) Independently either on rocks or stone slabs on metal.

Images, found stuck on the *bhiṭṭis* of the Āhom temples, belong to an earlier period, from the stylistic point of view. On the basis of the characteristic features and style, the images of the deity, belonging to the pre-Āhom period, may be placed in two groups. Images of the first group belong to a period from *c.* A.D. 9th to 10th century, while images of the second group may be placed between *c.* A.D. 10th and 12th centuries. Thus, having given an idea of the images of Gaṇeśa from Assam in general, we proceed to describe a few images of the most representative and peculiar types.

(A). **Images of the first group** : The earliest image of Gaṇeśa from Assam is seen on the Daparvatīa *dvāra*, which has been placed in A.D. 6th century. It is sculptured on the left *śākhā* of the *dvāra*. The four armed god holds in the right front hand *modaka* (?), in the right back a *paraśu*, in the left back a *triśūla* and in the left front *akshamālā*. A mouse, the *vāhana* of the deity, is depicted near his seat.

A rock-cut image of the deity is seen at Gaṇeśaghaṭ, Tezpur. It holds, clockwise, a *modaka* or *laḍḍuka*, *dhuturāpuṣpa*, *pāśā* and the remaining hand forming the *varada-mudrā*. Below the *āsana*, *vāhana*—a *muṣka*—is carved. Stylistically, the image may belong to about A.D. 9th century. At Kāhilipāra on the wayside, there is a high rock. There are some sculptured images of Gaṇeśa on that rock. The image at the middle is seated in the *Mahārājalīlā* pose, i.e. putting the left leg horizontally on the simple *āsana* keeping the right leg on the *āsana* vertically. As in the earlier cases, here also the deity is endowed with four hands. The right front hand holds a *laḍḍuka*, the right back-hand an *ankuśa*, the left back-hand, a *paraśu*, while the left front hand holds an *akṣamālā*. Below the simple *āsana* of the deity his *vāhana* is shown.

From Deopānī comes one stone image of the deity. It is a fourhanded image holding the *āyudhas* clockwise : *akshamālā* (?), *trisūla*, *paraśu* and *modaka*. Here the deity sits in the same *āsana* as in the former cases. But he puts the right leg horizontally and left leg vertically on the *āsana*. He wears usual *alaṁkāras*. Here the *vāhana* is not shown. The image like the other images possesses a crudity in style. On the eastern wayside to Kāmākhyā a rock-cut image of the deity is seen holding clockwise : *laḍḍuka*, paraśu and *akshamālā*. Here the deity sits in the same posture, but puts his right leg horizontally on the *āsana* and his left leg vertically. The person of the deity is decked with *alaṁkāras*. Here the *vāhana* is not shown.

The only miniature bronze image of the deity in Assam hails from the Narakāsura hill (Kāhilīpārā). In this miniature image the deity is depicted as four-handed as in the earlier cases. The right back-hand holds a *padma* (?), while the left back holds *triśūla*. The *āyudhas* of the front-hands are not clear probably due to the smallness of the image. However, it can be guessed that the right front-hand holds a *laḍḍuka* and the left front-hand holds an *akshamālā*. The sitting posture of the deity is usual. He keeps the left leg horizontally and the right leg vertically on the seat (*āsana*). The *vāhana* is depicted below the *āsana*. Behind the head of the deity a *prabhā* is arranged. Stylistically, the image belongs to A.D. 8th-9th century. Bhattasali[306] has described two miniature bronze images of the deity. Like our image, they also sit in the *mahārājalīlā posture*. Now, we see that the sitting posture of the deity in all these cases are almost the same. However, sometimes the right leg of the deity is shown vertically and the left leg horizontally on the *āsana* and sometimes we see that the left leg is made vertical, while the right leg is made horizontal. But, in both the cases, the front-hands are made to rest on the knees, while holding the respective *āyudhas*. The trunk is shown touching *laḍḍuka* or *modaka*, held in one of the front-hands, either in the left or in the right hand. The tusks are slightly visible in all the cases. The tundila (pot-belly) trait of all the figures of the deity is graphically shown.

The *āsana* attitude (*mahārājalīlā* pose) of all these figures and the style of holding the *āyudhas* can be compared with those of the images, illustrated by Bhattasali.[307] Two images of the deity in the same posture are found sculptured in two plaques of terracotta in Assam State Museum. One of these two hails from Bhaitbārī and the other is from Yogījān. At Deulgovinda, North-Guwahati, a *svayampradhāna* image of the deity is seen on a block of stone. Here the god is shown as four-handed holding the usual *āyudhas* seated in the *lalitāsana* posture. Images of the deity sitting in *lalitāsana* posture are not many in this State. There is an interesting image of the deity at *Vasundhārī*, Nowgong.[308] The image is found sculptured in a *khaṭṭaka*. Here the deity is made to sit in the *mahārājalīlā* pose. Above the head of the deity there is a Kīrttimukha with a "pearl necklace issuing out of its mouth."[309] The head of the deity is adorned with a *jaṭā-juṭa* (matted hair-dress). He has *padmakośas* as the *alaṁkāras*, *i.e. kuṇḍalas*. He holds in his four hands a *padma*, a *paraśu*, an *akshamālā* and a fruit, swallowing the last with his trunk. The *muśīka*, the *vāhana* of Gaṇapati, is depicted beneath his legs. The images of the deity of this type are found in a good number. For instance, at Basiṣṭha, Urvaśī and Umānanda few rock-cut images of the deity are noticed. On the *dvārasirapaṭṭi* of the Mājgāon ruins, Tezpur, miniature images of the god are also shown, which are datable to *c*. A.D. 9th century on the stylistic basis.

(B) Images of the Second Group : At Jarāsindhutolā, Kāmākhyā, two images of the deity have been noticed. Both of them are sculptured on a huge granite rock, along with an image of Veṇugōpala. Here the deity is made to sit in the usual pose putting his right leg vertically and left leg horizontally on the *āsana*. Here the four-handed deity holds in his right front-hand an unknown *āyudha*, in the right back a *paraśu*, in the left back a *padma* and in the front left *modaka*, which is touched by his trunk. He is decked with *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*, *hāras*, *keyūras*, *valayas*, and *upavīta*. He wears a *kaṭivastra* as *paridhāna*. Below the deity the *vāhana* is seen. The next image is also quite same as the preceding one. It is seated in the same way. The right front-hand holds some *āyudha* which is not clear. The right back-hand of the deity holds a *paraśu*. The left back-hand holds *modaka*, which is touched by the trunk. It wears the same kind of *alaṁkāras*. Below the *āsana* the *vāhana* is shown. Both the images are well-ornamented and the details of the images are shown clearly. On the strength of the style of ornamentation, these images may be placed to *c*. A.D. 10th century. A peculiar rock-cut image of Gaṇapati is seen at Teteliā-Borgāon (at Gaṇeśagurī) near the National Highway, Guwahati. Here the deity is made to sit in the conventional style. The four-handed image holds in his right front-hand a *śaṅkha*, in the right back-hand a *gadā*, in the left back-hand a *cakra* and in the left front-hand a *padma*. The trunk of the deity touches the *śaṅkha* held in the right front-hand. The *āsana* of the deity is a *padma*. Below this the *vāhana* of Gaṅeśa is shown. The deity wears the usual *alaṁkāras*, beautifully done, and above that he wears a *vanamālā*. Now. from the description of the image it is clear that the image had undergone the influence of Vaishṇavism. Here we should recall that Dharmapāla, a ruler of Kāmrūpa in A.D. 12th century, during the latest part of his life gave up Śaivism and accepted Vaishṇavism, as is proved by his last copper-plate grant. It is quite possible that taking the opportunity of the change of worship by the royal authority, sculptors carved this image, adding Vaishṇava characteristic features. As such, the image should be dated to *c*. A.D. 12th century. But whether, on stylistic grounds, it should be dated to that period is not very clear. In the Pañcha-Pāṇḍava Shrine at Pāṇḍu just on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, there is a group of five rock-cut figures, four of which represent Gaṇeśa. The biggest one is 177 cm in length. All thise figures are in the usual posture, *i.e.* seated and holding *āyudhas* in four hands in the usual way. The fifth figure represents a female deity. Probably it represents Durga (?). Locally, these images are known as the images of Pañcha-Pāṇḍava.[310] All the images of Gaṇeśa, found in Assam, have only four hands. Such kinds of images of Gaṇapati are found in plenty.

N.D. Choudhury[311] has noticed two images of Ganeśa at Haleśvar Devalaya and Biśvanāth ghāt in Sonitpur district. Both the images are seated in *padmāsana* attitude. But looking at the illustrations we are inclined to assign them to the Āhom period. He has also noticed an image of deity at Ganeś-pāhār (Sonakā). The image measures 174 cm × 140 cm. Here the deity is made to sit in the usual attitude holding the usual *āyudhas*. The sculpture is depicted in square design. To the right a miniature human figure is seen in dancing pose, while to the left two more human figures are seen in dancing pose. Choudhury has further mentioned about an image of the deity at Bahāpāhār (Māyāng), which is more than three metres in height, the biggest image of the god so far known in central Assam.

NṚTYA-GAṆAPATI : Images of the deity in the dancing pose are few and far between in Assam. At Kāmākhyā an image of Nṛtya-Gaṇapati (49 cm × 36 cm) has been noticed. It is sculptured on a block of basalt, which is stuck into a brick wall of recent construction. It has four hands. The āyudhas held in the hands are clockwise; *akshamālā*, *aṅkuśa*, *paraśu* and *laḍḍuka-pātra* (or modaka ?). Here the deity stands on his *vāhana*, a *mūṣika*, who, turning his head upwards, looks at his master out of joy. Both the legs of the deity are in *nṛtya* pose (dancing pose), *i.e.*, bent outwards. The trunk of the deity seems to touch the *āyudha* of the left front-hand. The deity is adorned with *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*, *hāras*, *keyūras*, *valayas*, *upavīta* or *sarpa* (?), and *nūpuras*. It appears, on stylistic grounds, the image should be placed in A.D. 10th century. This image can be compared with the image of Nṛtya-Gaṇapati from Fetgrām, North Bengal, illustrated by Sivaramamurti.[312] Like the image under review this image also dances on the *vāhana*. Both the images dance making *atībhaṅga* poses. However, a difference of little importance is also marked. Our image does not have any attendant, while the image from Bengal has two attendants playing on musical instruments. Secondly, unlike our image that image has eight hands. The next image of our discussion comes from Barpukhurīpār, near Tezpur. In this medium-sized sculpture, which is made out of a basalt block, the deity is made to dance on a *pūrṇavikaśitapadma*. The deity has eight hands. But unfortunately, the *āyudhas* in all the hands are broken. The god is endowed with the usual *alaṁkāras*, There is an attendant figure on either side of the deity. Both of them play on musical instruments. Two corners of the pointed *śilāpatta* of the image are occupied by two *Vidyādharas* in their conventional way. The middle of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is decorated with a *mālākarma* (floral design) instead of traditional Kirttimukha. The *vāhana* is absent here.

The execution of the image is so good that this image would have been, to be sure, an excellent instance of Nṛtya-Gaṇapatimūrti, had the hands not been sadly mutilated. It was discovered in a tank into which it might have been thrown. Though, at present, the image is not important from the iconographical point of view, yet from sculptural point of view and stylistic consideration, it is quite important. This piece of art can be placed in *c.* A.D. 10th century. This image can be compared well with the Nṛtya-Gaṇapatimūrti from Bengal, reproduced by Bhattasali.[313] A four-armed figure of Nṛtya-Gaṇapati, small in size, is seen at Madan-Kāmadēva-Parvat. The image is installed under a huge granite block at the site. His right leg bears the weight of the body. The *āyudhas* of the hands are clockwise : *akshamālā*, *paraśu*, *padma*, and *modaka*. The *modaka*, held in the left front-hand, is touched by the trunk. The *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image is not pointed and not decorated. Below the simple *pīṭha* of the deity his *vāhana* is depicted. A similar Nṛtya-Gaṇapatimūrti caved on a piece of stone is seen stuck on a concrete *dvāraśākhā* of the main entrance of the Aśvaklānta temple, North Guwahati. Images of Gaṇeśa in this posture are also reported from Ākāśigaṅgā.[314] Here the duty is depicted as naked exposing his *liṅga*. A beautifully sculptured stone image of Gaṇeśa is noticed at Mālinithān. Stylistically, this piece of art can be placed in *c.* A.D. 13th century or so (Fig. 80). It is observed that the trunk of the deity in all these cases is seen turning towards the left side. The tusks are not clearly shown. But they are traceable. Moreover, in most of the cases the front hands, it seems, are not kept free to balance the body during the movement of the body of the deity. In all the cases the deity is endowed with only four hands. Compared to the seated images, dancing images of the deity are fewer in number. The common posture of the image of the god is the sitting (*sthānaka*) posture. Seated images of the deity are found throughout the valley.

KĀRTTIKEYA : *Kārttikeya*, the brother of Gaṇeśa, is described in the works like the *Māhabharata*,[315] *Bṛhat-saṁhitā*,[316] *Vishṇudharmōttara*,[317] *Aṁsumadbhēdāgama*,[318] *Uttarakāmikāgama*,[319] and other South Indian texts. A few images of Kārttikeya have been noticed in Assam. The first image is noticed inside a modern Śiva temple, at Śukreśwar. It is housed near the *dvāra* of the *garbhagṛha*. The image is carved out of a block of basalt. Here the deity is made two-handed. He sits on the *vāhana*, a *mayūra*, in *mahārājalīlāsana*. The right hand of the deity is in *abhayamudrā*(?), while the left hand holds a *śakti*. The head of the deity is adorned with a *karaṇḍa-mukuta*. No attendant figure is represented here. The spreading plumage of the *mayūra* is not clearly visible. The *sthānka* pose of our image is comparable with that of a Kārttikeya image from Bengal, illustrated by Bhattasali.[320] An image of Kārttikeya is found, while digging a trench for water pipe near Deulgovinda, North-Guwahati. The image is seated in the *lalitāsana* postures. It is four-handed. The upper left hand holds an indstinct object. The lower left- and lower right-hands are in *abhaya*- and *varadamudrā* respectively. The upper right hand holds a *śūla*. The figure of the deity is decked with usual ornaments and draped in usual *vastra*. The deity is shown sitting on his *vāhana*. Stylistically, the image may belong to A.D. 9th-10th century. The next image of the deity is noticed at Urvaśī. The style of the representation of this Kārttikeyamūrti is same as the former one. Here also the deity is in an *āsana* pose on the back of his *vāhana*, as in the first case. The two-handed deity holds in his right hand a *śakti* and he keeps the other hand in *abhaya-mudrā*(?). A *mukuṭa*, badly worn out, and a pair of *kuṇḍalas* are seen as his *alaṁkāras*. To the left of the deity there is a small male figure in the *sṭhānaka* attitude. The right hand of the figure rests on the chest and the left one hangs down. The figure cannot be precisely identified. It seems this rock-cut image belongs to A.D. 8th-9th century, on stylistic grounds. The next image of Kārttikeya is seen at Devasthān (Maudāṅgā) in the district of Nowgāon (62 cm × 36 cm). The deity sits here in the *ardhaparyaṇkāsana* attitude. He has two hands. The right hand of the god holds a *sūla*. With the left hand he holds an *ayudha* which is not clear. Probably, it is a *vījapūraka*. Below the simple āsana of the deity is seen his *vāhana*. The *śilāpaṭṭa* is not pointed, as we see in many cases. Moreover, the *śilāpaṭṭa* in this case is undecorated. The simplicity and lack of ornamentation of the sculpture lead us to think that the icon may belong to about A.D. 8th-9th century. Unfortunately the images has been broken into two pieces. A miniature image of the deity is also noticed at Daparvatiā. The figure occurs at the top of the right *dvāra-śākhā* of the famous *dvāra* of a ruined temple of the Gupta period. Here the figure is seated in *ardha-paryaṅkāsana* on his *vāhana*, a *mayūra*. The right hand of the deity holds something in such a way that one would think that the same is offered to the *vāhana* to eat.[321] The left hand carries a *śūla* in his conventional way. The head of the deity is mutilated. This is the earliest image of Karttikeya in Assam. Another image of the deity from Guwahati is seen in the Assam State Museum. Here the two-handed deity is astriding on his *vāhana*. He holds with his right hand some unidentified *āyudha*, while his left hand holds a *śūla*. The god is looking to the front. The *vāhana* is seen looking to the right. The same slab of stone, which carries the present image, bears one of *Gaṇeśa* also. Another image of the deity is seen in the same museum. It was collected from *Urvaśī*. Here the deity is made to sit in *mahārājalīlasana* on the *vāhana*, which faces to the left. The right hand of the god holds a *śūla*. The other *āyudha*, held in the left hand, is not clear. To the left of the figure of the deity, a male figure in the *ṣṭhānaka* attitude is seen. The figure has a *jaṭā* on the head and carries a *Kamaṇḍalu* (?) with its left hand. Its left hand is kept on the chest probably holding something. The same slab of stone has the carvings of miniature images of Naṭarāja and Nṛtya-Gaṇapati, which are weathered badly. Stylistically, they belong to A.D. 8th or 9th century.[322] An image of the deity was found at Śadiyā,[323] the easternmost town of Assam. Here the deity is shown riding on his *vāhana* and holding on his hands a *śūla* and a *dhanu*.

A very fine image of Kārttikeya is from Bhāitbārī, near Phulbārī, Garo hills district., now being preserved in the State Museum, Guwahati. It is a terracotta sculpture, sadly mutilated. Here the deity is made to sit in the *ardhaparyaṅkāsana* posture. The upper part of the figure is gone. The two-handed figure holds some unidentifiable objects. On either side of the figure of the god there is a standing female figure. They are also in mutilated condition. Below the deity a peacock on which the deity is seated is shown clearly. Had this terracotta piece not broken, it would have been the most beautiful example of the figure of Kārttikeya. The style of the sculpture leads us to date it to *c*. A.D. 17th century. One beautiful image (stone) is noticed at Piṅgaleśvar. It is kept along with other loose sculptures found at the place in a shed. Here the deity is seen seated on the *vāhana* in his usual way. The head of the *vāhana* is slightly damaged. Stylistically, the image may be assigned to *c*. A D. 8th century or so. Mallināthan ruins have yielded a big image of the deity. Here the deity is made to sit on his *vāhana*, a *mayūra* in *mahārājalīlāsana*. The head of this big sized image and the right hand are sadly broken. The face of the *vāhana* is also broken. The upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is also mutilated. With his left hand the deity holds something (a *Kukuṭa* ?)

on the chest. Now, we see that sculptors carved the images of Kārttikeya, found in Assam, in many ways—sometimes the deity is depicted in *ardhaparyaṅkāsana*, sometimes in the *mahārājalīlā* posture, and sometimes he is seen astriding the *vāhana*. But we have not come across any *sthānaka* image of the deity. Another feature to be marked, is that in all the instances we have found that the *śūla* is the invariable *āyudha* of the deity. But, unfortunately, in all the cases the second *āyudha* (held by the next hand) is not clear at all.

PĀRVATĪ : Iconographical descriptions of Pārvatī and Gaurī are given in the *Brahmavaivarta-purāṇa*.[324] A description of the image of Gaurī is also found in the *Vishṇudharamottora*.[325] Rao has given the description of the images of Pārvatī and Umā. But the texts are not mentioned.

Independent images of Gaurī and Umā are not found in Assam so far. Only a few images of Pārvatī have been noticed. Dalton[326] noticed some images of Pārvatī near Dibrugarh in some temple ruins. It was also reported that a fine specimen was found in Guwahati with a *khaḍga* in her right hand and a *darpaṇa* (mirror) in the left.[327] The same image, it seems, is being displayed in the Assam State Museum. But looking at the *āyudhas*, held in the hands of the image, it cannot be identified as the image of Pārvatī. Though the *darpaṇa* is held by the image of Umā and Durgā in a placid form, yet the *khaḍga* is not held by an image of any of these goddesses. A *khaḍga* is commonly held by an image of *dvārapālikā*. So, the identity of the image in question is doubtful.

NANDIN : Nandī or Nandin, the *vāhana* (bull vehicle) of Śiva, is represented in two ways, *i.e.* in the anthropomorphic form and in the theriomorphic form. His hybrid form is also known. In his anthropomorphic form and hybrid form, he is rather known as attendant of Śiva than as *vāhana*. The iconograpic descriptions of Nandī are found in the *Matsya-purāṇa*[328] and the *Vishṇudhavmottara*.[329] Rao[330] has given a description of Nandī from an unnamed South Indian text. Two images of Nandī in the human form have been noticed on a *dvāra* (Pl. VIII. Figs. 1 & 2) from Majgāon, Tezpur. Both the images are carved at the bottom of the two *śākhās*, along with the images of Gaṅgā (in one case Yamunā) and Dvārapālas. In both the cases, he stands in *tribhaṅga* posture holding a long *daṇḍa* with both the hands. The *daṇḍa* stands vertically in between his legs. His chin leans at the top of the *daṇḍa*. His face resembles a face of a monkey. As the *dvāra* has already been placed in the 9th century, these two images of Nandī will go with the same, as far as their dates are concerned. A few images of Nandī in theriomorphic form have also been noticed. An image of this vṛṣabha-vāhana of Siva (135 cm×92 cm) is seen at Hājo.

Here Nandī is depicted in a sitting posture. His back legs are not seen in the photograph as they are in the reverse side. The front right leg is stretched forward, while the front left leg is bent under the body. His hump is quite distinct. But it is short. He does not wear any *ghanṭā* (bell) on his neck, nor he has any decorative *vastra* on his body. The sitting posture of this figure of Nandī can be compared with the one, reproduced by Bhattasali.[331] Like our image, that one also stretches forward one of its front legs and bends the other. In that case also we do not see the back legs. In both the cases horns are omitted. However, a slight difference is marked. The image from Bengal has a suspended *ghanṭā* on its neck, two *mālās* (garlands) around the hump and "an embroidered carpet on the back from tail to neck".[332] Another image of Nandī (46 cm × 31 cm) is noticed at Numalīgarh. Here also the figure of the *vāhana* of Śiva, depicted independently, is carved out in the same way as the former. It is really a very good specimen of the image of Nandī. The back of the figure is beautified with a *pīṭhopādhāna* (cushion). It has a *mālā* on the neck, and a rope in the nose. At present the image is kept in front of the Numalīgarh temple which is of recent construction. Stylistically, it may be attributed to A.D. 9th-10th century. The image of Nandī, found in front of a modern temple at Rengbeng, Nowgaon district, sits in the same way. It has a *ghanṭā* suspended on its neck as in the illustrated image by Bhattasali.[333] An image of Nandī is seen at Gosāijuri. In this image two horns are shown, but now they are broken. A few images of Nandī are also seen in the Nowgaon Park. They are quite alike. A big figure of Nandī carved in stone, is noticed at Akāsīgaṅgā.[334] At Baḍgaṅgā two big stones carry two figures of a seated Nandī (48 cm × 77 cm), facing the temple.[335] At Mornoi in one modern temple an image of Nandī is seen. The *Nāmghar*, which is of the modern times, houses, in addition to this image, an image of Sūrya and a *Śiva-liṅga* of the pre-Āhom age. Quite a few seated images of Nandī were discovered in the Ambari excavations and now they have been preserved in Assam State Museum, Anthropology Department's Museum, Guwahati University.

SIVAGAṆA etc : The dwarf Śiva-Gaṇas are sometimes depicted along with the figure of Śiva, and other Śaiva deities. In Assam, figures of Śiva-Gaṇas are not common. However, figures of dwarf Gaṇas were noticed in the ruins of *Ākāśīgaṅga.*[336] In the same ruin, figures of danseuses were also noticed.[337] A beautifully sculptured image of a *yōgī* or a *bhakta* of Śiva in relief on a plaque of terracotta from Kukurmutā, Guwahati, is preserved in the Assam State Museum. Here the figure is shown with an emaciated body, exposed veins, ribs, and other bones in a dancing posture. With the right hand, it holds something not clear and the left hand holds a *tridaṇḍa.* A *Ghaṭa* or a *kamaṇḍalu* seems to be suspended from the arm of the right hand. The face of the figure is corroded. The lower portion of the plaque with the feet of the figure, is broken and missing. The identity of the figure is not clear. In view of the presence of a tridaṇḍa in one of the hands of the figure, it may be taken as an image of *bhakta* of Śiva. Again, looking at its emaciated body, it may be taken as the image of Ṛṣi Bhṛiṅgī. Rao[338] has illustrated an image of Ardhanārīśvara, where the emaciated figure of Ṛṣi Bhṛṅgī is shown. The present sculpture, from the stylistic point of view, may be placed in A.D. 10-11th century.

A figure of a Śiva Gaṇā sculptured on a block of stone, which carried some other stone sculptures found in the ruins of a temple at the place, i.e , Bengal, Basti. Here the pot-bellied figure, the Gaṇa, is made to dance holding a tridaṇḍa and a ghantā in his hands.

ŚIVALIṄGAS : Śivaliṅgas are described in many texts, such as the *Bṛhat-saṁhitā*,[339] *Kāraṇāgama*,[340] *Suprabhedāgama*,[341] *Mayamata*,[342] *Mukuṭāgama*,[343] *Kāmikāgama*[344] and *Rūpamaṇḍana*.[345] There are many varieties of liṅgas. Here we are concerned with *mānuṣa liṅgas* (made by man) of *achala* type only. The great number in which the Śivaliṅgas abound in the Brahmaputra Valley and the fact that all the Śiva temples there enshrine inside them the Śivaliṅga suggests that the *liṅga*, the symbol of unification of Śiva and Śakti, or the male and female procreative principles of the universe, as elsewhere, was the most popular form in which Śiva was worshipped. Most of the liṅgas are seen in the temple ruins. Sometimes we see *liṅgas*, lying scattered in an uncared state also. But we do not see any peculiarity in them. Most of them portray the same theme in the repeated way. In the following way, however, we can group them :

(*a*) Plain ;
(*b*) Caturmukha and
(*c*) Pañcamukha.

The plain *liṅgas* can be again sub-divided as follows :

1. having a square or rectangular *pīṭhikā* and the *liṅga* proper with *Vishṇu-bhāga* (octogonal part) and *Rudrābhāga* or *Pujābhāga* (the cylindrical part at the top) ;[346]
2. the square or rectangular *pīṭhikā* with plain round liṅgas ;
3. having round *pīṭhikā* and the *liṅga* part as in (1) ;
4. the plain round *pīṭhikā* and the plain round liṅgas ; and
5. elaborately carved *pīṭhikā* with plain *linga* or carved *linga*. The nāli (water outlet) of the *yonipīṭha* is generally made long. Plain *liṅgas* of all these varieties are found almost everywhere in the plains of Assam.

We have only one instance of Caturmukhaliṅga. It is made of bronze, found at Kāhilipārā, near Guwahati (pl. V Fig. 4.). It is 9 cm in height. An *asṭadalapadma* (eight-petalled lotus) is cast in the centre of the *pīṭha* on which the *liṅga* stands. The *liṅga* has faces which are supposed to face four cardinal points, and in-between the faces, *i.e.* in the four gaps four heads of *sarpas* are shown. The *yonipīṭha* is clearly depicted. At the base of the yonipīṭha a few engraved letters are found, which date to *c.* A.D. 9th century. The *pañcamukha-liṅga* also is exemplified by only a solitary icon. This is a huge *liṅga*, which still stands at Ketakībārī, Tezpur. The height of this liṅga is 305 cm. This is the higest Śiva linga so far discovered in Assam, Tezpur. This *liṅga* is *daśa-koṇika* (decagonal). The *Brahmabhāga* is not clear and the *pītha* is not with the liṅga. The yonipīṭha is noticed at the place separately. It measures 305cms × 380cms. It has five faces at the top.[347] It is divided into three parts. The upper parts a *pañcha koṅika*. The middle part is *aṣṭakoṅika*, while the lower part is *catur-koṅika*. This *liṅga* is highly weathered and the material (granite) from which it is carved is not good. This *liṅga* is still worshipped by the people of the locality. From its style, it can be said that it is quite old. The plain *liṅgas* most of which are covered out of basalt blocks, stylistically, belong to the early mediaeval period. Even some of them may date to early period. However, it is not very easy to differentiate them from the *liṅgas* belonging to a late period, if they are mixed together. But it is easy to recognise the old ones when they are *in situ*.

At Kenduguri (Jogījān) in Nowgaon district, there are some ruined temples. Out of these ruins traces of eight *garbhagṛhas* have been found. Each *garbhagṛha* house a Śivaliṅga. In each case it is noticed that the yoṇipītha of the *liṅga* is rectangular in size. The *liṅga*, in each case, is round and devoid of carvings. Only the *Rudrabhāga* and *Vishnubhāga* of these liṅgas are visible. These liṅgas may be dated to *c.* A.D. 8th century or so, as they are found in situ. At Davakā (Mikirāti) a temple houses a Śivaliṅga which is caved out of basalt. Here the *Yonipīṭha* is round, so also the Śivaliṅga. They are devoid of decoration. The *liṇga* of the place may belong to about A.D. 6th century. At Pañcharatanghāt a similar liṅga is also noticed. Like these there are many Śivaliṅgas *in situ*, belonging to the early mediaeval period. In many places stray liṅgas are noticed. Just near the western *toḍaṇa* (the last gate) of Kāmākhyā temple, there are a few rock-cut miniature temples (Śikhara) design. One of these miniature temple design houses a rock-cut miniature Śiva-liṅga. Near this a row of rock-cut Śiva-liṅgas are noticed. They do not have yonipīṭhas (Fig 55). From the style of the design of the Śikhara, and a rock-cut image in sthānaka attitude inside a Śikhara, one can place them including the liṅgas in *c.* A.D. 10th-11th century.

IV. *Śakti Images*

MAHISHAMARDINĪ : Mahishamardinī, an āspect of Durgā, is still a popular goddess in India, especially in Bengal and Assam. This form of the goddess is beautifully delineated in the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and the *Deviīmāhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*.[348] In addition to there authorities, there are some texts, such as the

Matsypurāṇa,[349] the *Agnipurāṇa*,[350] the *Kālipurāṇa*,[351] and some other later works, where any description to a more or less estimable degree, of the deity is found. In addition to the images of this aspect of the deity a few images representing other two aspects have been noticed in Assam. They will be described in detail in the following pages. Most of the extant images of Mahishamardinī, which are seen in different places of Assam, are rock-cut images. However, a few images of the deity carved on stone-slabs are also found. Stylistically, most of these images belong to A.D. 9th-10th century, as we shall show. Though a large number of the images of the deity have been found in the Brahmaputra Valley, yet they are not in good shape owing to faulty preservation. In most of the cases, either the arms or the *āyudhas* held in hands are broken off or have become indistinct. As such, they fail to furnish us with full information. However, a few images of the deity have survived in good condition and on them we base our details. Most of the images found are ten-armed. However, eight and four-handed images are also met with. The best image of the deity (92 cm × 05 cm) comes from Śirājulī, a village in the vicinty of Dhekīājulī.[352] This splendid image, which is in a perfect state of preservation, displays excellent proportions in execution and is a pleasing work of art. Here the deity is shown standing in *atibhaṅga* posture. The right leg of the deity is placed on the back of her leonine *vāhana*, a lion, and the left one is kept on the back of the beheaded Mahishāsura. In her ten hands *āyudhas* are placed clockwise : *śula*, *taṅka*, *bāṇa khaḍga*, *kheṭaka*, *dhanu*, *paraśu*, *aṅkuśa* and *keśabandha* (hair lock) of the demon. She is decked with a *karaṇḍa-mukuta*, *kuṇḍalas* and *hāras*. Her *kaṭivastra* is a long *sārī*. The *śūla* held in front of the right hand pierces the chest of the demon with its three prongs. The head of the *asura*, who comes out of the decapitated neck of the *mahisha* (buffalo), its previous form, bends downwards as the deity holds his *keśabandha* forcibly with her left hand. The right leg of the *asura* is pounced by the *siṅha*, the *vāhana* of the goddess, while the left one is still partially inside the decapitated neck. The head of the *mahiṣa* is seen lying below. The *asura* fights with the Devi with a *khaḍga*. The *śillāpaṭṭa* of the image is almost round and undecorated. It has a Kīrttimukha at the top. The sculpture definitely bear the pre-Āhom art style. The second image for our consideration is found at Hājo. The small image is carved on a block of basalt. The image is installed in the shrine of Durgā. Here the deity is represented with ten hands. The deity stands placing the right leg on the back of the *vāhana* and the left one on the theriomorphic Mahiṣāsura whose head is cut off and from the neck of whom he comes out in the anthropomorphic form. The deity in her ten hands holds the following āyudhas clockwise (from upper most right) : *triśūla*, *bāna*, *ankuśa*, *gadā*, *mudgara*, *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *muṣala* (?), *dhanu* and a *nāgapāśa*. She is decked with *karaṇḍamukuṭa*, *hāras*, *valayas*, *kuṇḍalas*, and *nūpuras*. She wears a *kaṭimekhalā* and *kaṭivastra* as *paridhāna*. The *triśula* held in the right front-hand of the goddess is thrust into the chest of Mahishāsura. The original eyes of the deity are lost. So, later two golden eyes are put in the place of these ones. Stylistically, it can be taken as a pre-Āhom sculpture. A beautiful image of Mahishamardinī is seen at Ulubāri Guwahati[353] on the side the G.S. Road. Like the former ones, it is also a ten-handed image. Here the deity stands in the *atibhaṅga* posture, placing the right leg on the *vāhana* and the left leg on the *mahiṣa* in the usual way, The *āyudhās* of the hands are clockwise (from the upper right : *triśūla, taṅka, akshamālā, bāṅa* (?), *khaḍga, dhanu, ghanṭa, ankuśa,* and the *keśabandha* of the *asura.* The goddess thrusts the *triśūla* into the chest of the Mahishāsura. Mahishāsura fights with the Devī holding a *khaḍga* in the usual pose. The *vāhana* of the deity is seen pouncing upon the right leg of the *asura.* Another *simha* (?) is seen pouncing upon the left knee of the *asura.* The decapitated head of a Mahishāsura lies behind his anthropomorphic form whose one leg is seen inside the severed neck of the *mahisha.* The *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image is pointed and is decked with figures of Kīrttimukha and Vidyādhara. On the basis of style, this piece of art can rightly be placed in A.D. 11th century.

At Siddeśvarī temple, Śoālkuchi, an image of the deity is seen. Like the former images, it also stands the same way. Here the deity is made to hold the following *āyudhas* clockwise in her ten hands (from the upper most right), *trisūla,* an unidentified *āyudha, paraśu, khaḍga, śūla, sarpa, cakra, dhanu,* an unidentified *āyudha* and a *ghaṇṭa.* The *triśūla* is seen piercing the chest of the asura who holds a *khaḍga* to fight with the goddess. The *sarpa* held in one of the left hands of the deity, as mentioned above, coils round the head of the *asura* and lifts him. The deity is ornamented and draped in the usual way. Other features of the image are quite common. The *śilāpaṭṭa* is decorated with a Kīrttimukha and two Vidyādharas. Similarly, a four-handed stone image of the deity in the nāta *maṇḍapa* of the Kāmakhyā temple and another small image of the goddess is noticed along with the image of Umā Maheśvra and a Sivaliṅga on the way to Kāmakhyā. A two sadly mutilated stone figure of the deity are also seen in the Assam State Museum. In all these four cases, as we have seen, the right leg of the deity is placed on the back of the *vāhana,* while the left one is on the Mahishāsura. We observe that both the form of the *asura* are dedicted in all these icons; but the later form of the *asura* is only depicted as active. In all these cases the right leg of the *asura* is pounced upon by the *vāhana* of the deity. The *siṁha* (*vāhana* of the deity) and Mahishāsura are depicted facing each other in each case. Now, we observe that so far as the style and traits are concerned, all these images represent the same portrait, characterized by marked similarity. The only slight dissimilarity is that they might not hold the same *āyudhas* But most of the *āyudhas* are common.

These images can be well compared with the image of the deity found in the proximity of Dacca, now displayed in the Decca Museum [354] In this image, Like ours, the left leg of the *asura* is depicted half outside the trunk of the decapitated *mahisha,* while the *siṁha,* the *vāhana* of the goddess, pounces upon his right leg. The deity seizes the *keśabandha* of a Mahishāsura with her left hand and pierces a *śūla* held in the right hand through the chest of *asura.* Two female figures on both sides of the deity are seen fighting with *asura.* Our images, however, do not depict these attendant figures. The images of the deity from Bhaktapuse and Paleānchowk, Nepal,[355] also have some similarities with our images in so far as the composition and the themes are concerned. The next image of our description is a rock-cut image, found near the old water supply works, on the bank of the Brahmaputra Guwahati. It is an eighteen-handed image of the deity (38cm × 29cm). This is the only eighteen-handed image of the deity found so far in Assam. Though the image itself has hardly sustained any injury, yet it is partially worn out due to the bad quality of the stone and water action.

Here the deity is made to stand putting her right leg on the back of the lion and the left on the body of the *mahisha*, the former embodiment of Mahishāsura. The *āyudhas*, held in the hands of the goddess, with the exception of these in the front ones and the right and left upper most ones, cannot be recognised. The right uppermost hand holds a *khaḍga*, while the left one holds a *kheṭaka* in the usual pose. The right fronthand holds a *śūla* which is thrust into the chest of the *asura*, while the left fronthand holds the *keśabandha* of the *asura*, who fights bold with the Devi holding a *khaḍga* in the usual way. The *vāhana* of the deity is seen pouncing on the right leg of the *asura*. The lower half of the leg of the *asura* is seen still undisgorged inside the decapitated trunk of the *mahisha*. The deity seems to wear the usual *alaṁkāras* and *vastras*. This piece of sculpture may roughly be placed in A.D. 9th century, from the point of view of its style of execution. Now, it is observed that though the image of the deity is endowed with eighteen hands, yet the scene portrayed in this sculpture is a repetition of the earlier ones. The same theme, i.e. the motif of fighting, and the same characteristic features have been repeated in her rock-cut image of the deity on the eastern way to Kāmākhyā and in the image, found in the *nāṭghar* of the Kāmākhyā temple and at Siddeśvari. All the images seem to be contemporāneous with each other and are ten-handed. They are affected by the turns and twists of weather. Most of the *āyudhas*, held in the hands, are worn out. In all the cases we find that the right left hands a hold a *khaḍga* and *kheṭaka* respectively. The uppermost right hand holds the *śūla* which pierces into the chest of the *asura* and her left front hand holds the hair lock of the *asura*. As far as the mode of representation and the characteristic features are concerned, virtually no major difference is observed among them. The minor difference is that the *āyudhas* which are held in the hands of the deity and are now beyond recognition might vary from image to image.

However, one image of the deity, depicting slightly a different picture, is also noticed. It is an image from Bhoiparvat in the Mikir hills district.[356] Here the deity stands in *tribhaṅga* attitude. Her right leg is placed on the decapitated *mahisha*, while the left one is placed on the back of the *vāhana*. The *āyudhas*, held in the nine hands of the Devī, are clockwise (from uppermost left)) *triśūla*, *taṅka* (?), *khaḍga*, *bāna* (?) *kheṭaka*, *dhanu*, *sarpa* and one hand holds the hair of the *asura*. The lowest left hand does not seem to hold an *āyudha*. Whether it exhibits any *mudrā* is difficult to say. The *triśūla* is thrust into the chest of the *asura* in the usual way. Mahishāsura holds a *khaḍga* and fights with Devī. The *vāhana* of the deity pounces upon the left leg of the *asura*. The lower half of the right leg of the *asura* seems to be inside the decapitated trunk of the *mahiṣa*, as is depicted in the earlier cases. The person of the goddess is decked with a *karaṇḍamukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras* and *valayas*. She wears a *kaṭimekhalā* and a *kaṭivastra* to drape the lower portion of her body. In this image the peculiarity is that the placements of the *asura* and the *vāhana* of the deity are just the reverse of the above cases, *i.e.* the *siṁha* is placed on the left of the deity, while the *asura* is placed in front thereof. From the stylistic consideration, it seems fit to push the date of the icon back to A.D. 9th century or so.

Two figures of the deity are reported to have been noticed. The first was noticed in the Seesee riverbed.[357] The other was found at a place in South west Kāmrūp, about 40 km to the south-west of Guwahati.[358] Similar sculptures were noticed in the Chārduār ruins.[359] A ten handed image of Mahisha-mardinī was lying somewhere in the heaps of ruins at Singrī,[360] but now it is not traceable. One basalt block at Bamuni hill carried a figure of this goddess. It was one of the fine specimens of Assamese carving.[361] Unfourtunately, the image is not seen now. N.D. Choudhury[362] noticed a miniature bronze image of the deity in the residence of Sri U.C. Bora, Rangmahal, North Guwahati. It is an eight-armed figure of the deity holding *triśula*, *paraśu*, *bāna*, *khaḍga*, *chakra*, *sarpa* and the lock of the hair of the *asura*. He has placed the icon in *c*. A.D. 12th country. The last[363] image of our description is from Kukurmutā, now preserved in the Assam State Museum. It is an eight-handed miniature image. Most of the *āyudhas* held in them are indistinct. Moreover, the image is very small and so it makes more difficult to identify them properly. The upper right and left hands of the deity hold a *khaḍga* and a *kheṭaka* in her conventional style and so, is the case with the front hands. The right front hand holds a *śūla* which wounds the *asura* and the left front hand holds the hair-lock of the *asura*.

The peculiarity of the image lies in the fact that the *vāhana* is not depicted here. The sculptors, as we see in other cases, hardly forget to represent the *vāhana* of the goddess. This is the only icon of Mahishamardinī belonging to the pre-Āhom period, that has been discovered so far in this area where the absense of the *vāhana* is marked. Having finished the description of the images of the deity, we propose to make a general observation of the theme of the images of Mahishamardini, found in Assam in a few lines. The theme of the images of the deity found in Assam is the same as is depicted in her images, found elsewhere in India. As regards the representations of the *āyudhas*, we do not see much difference. However, the style of representing the *vāhana* of the deity and the *asura* or the placements of these two, noticed in our images, differ from them in others. Bhattasali[364] has illustrated a brass image of the deity from Bengal. The casting of the image is quite recent, about a century old. Exactly similar images of Mahishamardinī are made of earth in Assam even these days at the time of the Durgā-pūja festival. Our view is that the present illustration is quite similar to some of the old images of the deity from Assam and Bengal and it shows that the style of representing the images of the deity in Assam and Bengal is similar and that the formula of making images of this deity evolved long ago is still in vogue.

DURGĀ : Mahishamardinī is an *ugra* (terrific) form of Durgā, one of the important *śakti* goddesses. Sometimes she is represented in the *śānta* (pacific) form also. In the *Devīmāhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya puraṇa*[365] various aspects of the Devī are described along with their icon types. The *Vaikhānasāgama*[366] and some other *śākta Upa purāṇas*.[367] also describe the icons of the Devī.

Two big images of Durgā in the *śānta* form have been noticed. The first image is noticed at Deopānī,[368] near Golaghāt. The image is at present housed in a modern temple and is still worshipped by the local people. It is of a quite a big size (169 cm × 122 cm). It is carved on a block of granite. Here the deity is in *samapādasthanaka* attitude. She has four hands. The *āyudhas* held in the hands are clockwise : *padma* in *varada-hasta-muḍrā*, *triśūla*, *cakra*, and *śaṅkha* in *varada-hasta-mudra*. The deity is decked with a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭu*, *kuṇḍalas*, *haras*, *keyūras*, *sarpavaijayantī*, like the one generally worn by *Vishṇu*, *valayas*, *etc*. She is draped in a *kaṭivastra* like a short *śārī*. The deity seems to be in *śānta-rūpa*. She has the third eye on her forehead. To the left of the deity, on the *pīṭha* is seen a female figure in the *sṭhānaka* attitude and in the *añjalihasta* pose A quite similar figure is present on the pīṭha on the right side of the deity. Again on the *śilāpatta* to the right side of the deity, a miniature image of *Gaṇeśa* is seen at her waist civil. To the left on the same level the image of Kārttikeya is seen. Both the figures are in the *āsana* attitude and with their respective *vāhanas*.

Behind the head of the deity a *prabhāvalī* is arranged. The *pīṭha* on which the deity stands is not clear and the lower portion of the same is broken. The upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is also gone. The execution of the sculpture, though not excellent, is not of quite inferior type. The whole image is coloured with some modern paint. The next image is seen at Dimāpur now in Nagaland.[369] It is also as big as the first one in size. Like the former image this is also a four-handed image and is in the *samapādasthānaka* attitude. The front-hands are broken. The right back-hand hols a *pāśa* and the left back-hand holds a *triśūla*. The face of the deity is mutilated. The breasts of the deity are worn out in such a way that one would mistake it as a male deity. At the *pratiṣṭhāna* are seen two female figures in the *sthānaka* attitude and in the *añjali-hasta* pose. They flank the deity in the same way as we have already noticed in the previous case. Again, at the waist level of the deity, on both sides, Gaṇesa and Kārttikeya are represented, as in the previous case. The *alaṁkāras* worn by the deity are almost worn out. Here she does not wear the *sarpa-vaijayantī*, worn by the previous image. The deity seems to wear a *kaṭimekhalā* on her waist. A *prabhā* is seen behind the head of the deity. On what kind of *pīṭha* the deity stands is not clear.

Now, we see that the sculptors adopted the same technique, same style in executing these two images representing the same theme. The second image does not wear *kaṭivastra* nor it wears a *vaijayantī* of *sarpa*, as we have noticed in the first image. We do not see the third eye on the forehead of the second image, as the head of the image is badly damaged. It is difficult to say that the *āyudhas* were held by the mutilated hands of the second image. However, we can infer that, as in the former case, in this instance also the broken hands might have carried *śaṅkha* and *padma*, while exhibiting *varadamudrā*. Looking at the physiognomy of both in the icons, it can be easily guessed that they are different in style from the common sculptures recovered from the Brahmaputra Valley or from Bengal. We have already noticed some Vishṇu images from this particular place having the same physiognomy which might have been affiliated to a culture, influenced by the non-Āryans. In this particuliar area in Assam, there still exists the ruins of the peculiar culture, associated with the Kachāris.[370] Particularly, the crudity in execution in the case of the figures of Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya and the attendants in these two pieces of sculptures is well marked. However, from the stylistical point of view and palaeographical considerations (as one of the Vishṇu images found in association with the present images now in the Assam State Museum bears an inscription in a script ,possessing the characteristic features of A.D. 9th century. These two images can, however, be placed in A.D. 8th century. There are more inscribed images from this place which date to the same period.

Both the images can be identified with Durgā. Both of them can be called as the placid form (*sāntarūpa*) of the Devī. Like these images, in Bengal[371] also some four-handed and three-eyed images of Durgā have been discovered. As in our cases sometimes Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa, the two sons of the Devī, are found accompanying her. But the *āyudhas*, held by our images and the images from Bengal, do not tally with each other. Why the *siṁha*, the *vāhana* of the deity, is not shown in our case is not known At Pañch Pāṇḍava temple, Kāmākhyā, along with four rock-cut images of Ganeśa, a female figure is noticed. This figure is identified as Durga[372] by K.N. Dikshit. If this figure can at all be identified with Durgā, then this figure may represent the goddess in her *śānta* form.

SIṀHAVĀHINĪ DURGĀ : In addition to the two former aspects, already mentioned, Durgā is sometimes found riding on her *vāhana*. Image of Durgā in this form is not usually met with. An interesting image of Siṁhavāhinī-Durgā is preserved in the Assam State Museum. The image is carved on a small block of granite. Here the deity is seen sitting astride on her *vāhana*. The deity has four hands. She holds a *khaḍga* with the right hand. The hand rises to the height of her head while holding the *āyudha* and it shows that she is in a fighting pose. The back-right hand does neither show to carry any *āyudha*, nor does it form any precise *mudrā* (?).[373] The palm of the hand simply turns upwards. The left hand holds a *kheṭaka*, while the left back-hand probabaly holds a *ṣūla*. The trace of a *jaṭāmukuṭa* on her head can be seen. No attendant figure is depicted in the image. On the strength of its style, it can be placed in *c*. A.D. 9th century. The Image is badly weathered.

Rao[371] has spoken of the images of Ambikā and Aparājitā, both of them being different aspects of Durgā. In both these aspects of Durgā, the deity should be sculptured as riding on a *siṁha* and should be four-handed holding *khaḍga*, and *kheṭaka* and other two *āyudhas* variantly. But the author has not illustrated any image of these aspects of the deity. However, Banerjea[375] has illustrated an image of Durgā, wherein the deity rides on her *vāhana* and holds a *kheṭaka*, a *khaḍga*, *śūla* and displays the fourth hand in *varada-mudrā*. This image, which hails from Bihar, is quite similar to ours, in so far as the representation of the theme is concerned. He identifies it as Durgā in *Siṁhavāhinīmurti* (lion-mounted image). That way we can also call the present image a Siṁhavāhinī Durga. In the Barkhetrimauza on the west bank of Moāmāri-jān it is reported that a stone image have been noticed, which is locally called Bhāgheśvarī.[376] The female four-handed deity is shown seated on a tiger. This image may represent Siṁhavāhinī Durgā like the earlier one. Unfortunately, the date of the image is not mentioned. N.P. Choudhury[377] has noticed a rock-cut image of the deity (48 cm × 30 cm) in Vasundhārī Pāhār, Nowgāon District. Here the goddess is made to stand in *Samapādasthānaka attitude* on her *vāhana*, the lion. The four-armed deity holds in her hand a *cakra*, a *Khādga*, a *pāśa* and a *gadā*. The image is heavily applied with oil and vermilion. The local people calls it Vasundhārī.

CĀMUṆḌĀ : Cāmuṇḍā is one of the terrific aspects of the *Devī*. The *Matsya-purāṇa*,[378] *Angi-purāṇa*,[379] *Vishṇudharmōttara*,[380] *Purva-kāraṇāgama*,[381] *Aṁsumad-bhedāgama*,[382] *etc*. include the description of Cāmuṇḍā. In Assam only five images of Cāmuṇḍā have come to light. The first two are lying near the Kāmākhyā market in front of a small shrine. The first image is carved on a block of stone (112 cm × 12 cm). Here the deity is made to sit on a *pretāsana* (prostrate corpse) in *Mahārājalīlā* posture, *i.e.*, placing the right leg vertically and the left leg horizontally on the seat. She holds in her four hands clockwise (from upper right or front) : *kapāla kartarikā* (knife), *triśūla*, *muṇḍa* ; and *jaṭāmukuṭa*(?) on the head is beautifully executed. Two *jaṭā-cūḍas* (hair tufts) from her head rise up on both the sides. The deity possesses all the characteristic features to depict the ideas of the terrific, the weird and the uncanny in the realm of Indian iconographic art. She is depicted with a long tongue, emaciated body, withered belly, sunken eyes and exposed ribs and veins. She wears a *muṇḍa-mālā* as *alaṁkāra*. In addition to the *mālā*, she has other *alaṁkāras*, such as, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *valayas*, *etc*. There are a few miniature ghosts (*bhūtas*) below the *pretāsana* of the deity. The *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image is pointed and decorated with the figures of a Kīrttimukha and two Vidyādharas. Stylistically, the image can be assigned to *c.* A.D. 10th-11th century (Fig. 58).

The second image of the deity, which is just placed near the first, is carved on a block of stone (51 cm × 46 cm). Here also the terrible deity appears with four hands and she sits on a *pretāsana* in the same way as shown above. The *āyudhas* in her four hands are clockwise (from upper right or front) : *kartarikā*, *kapāla*, *triśūla* and *muṇḍa*. The *muṇḍamālā*, worn by the deity, is prominent. The *jatābandha* and the *jatācūḍas* rising up like flames from either side of the head are well depicted. The expression of the terrible look, *i.e.* sunken eyes, protruding teeth, long tongue, shrunken belly, emaciated body, exposed veins and ribs, is well depicted. The upper portion of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is almost round and on the edge flames are seen and they form a beautiful *prabhā* behind the head of the deity. Stylistically, like the previous image the present image also belongs to *c.* A.D. 10th-11th century.

In fact, slight distictntion between these two images is noticed. The sitting postures of both images mark a striking similarity. Both of them hold the *āyudhas* in the same way. Both the images sit on *pretāsnas*. They both have terrible look, the slight difference consists in the fact that the *śilāpaṭṭa* of the second image which has a *prabhā*, is almost round and does not contain the figures of Kīrttimukha and Vidyādharas whereas these are seen in the first image. The third image is found inside the *nāṭghar* of the Kāmākhyā temple proper. The 140 cm high figure is depicted in the *nṛtya*(?) attitude. It stands on a *preta piṭha* which is a common feature of this deity. It is a six-handed image. The *ayudhas* are clockwise : *kartarikā*, *ḍamaru*, *kapāla*, *muṇḍa*, *khaṭabhaṅga* and *śula*. The *jaṭābandha* on the head of the deity is quite clearly depicted. She is decked with all the common *alaṁkāras*. The main attraction of the decoration is the long *muṇḍamālā* worn by the deity in the conventional way. Here also the deity is made to appear in the same style of terrible look. The whole sculpture is under a thick layer of vermilion and, as such it is not possible to throw any light on its age. However, we notice that it bears all the characteristic features of a mediaeval icon of Cāmuṇḍā.

Bhattasali[383] has reproduced an image of Cāmuṇḍā. Though it has ten arms, yet it offers some resemblance to our image. The *sṭhānaka* postures of both the images are quite identical. In both the cases we notice that legs are bent outwards and that the sculptors executed carefully the terrible features. The differences one notices are that the image illustrated by Bhattasali, is in dancing attitude "in *tribhaṅga* pose on the shoulders of a plump boy who is smiling and making the gesture, 'Fear not'," [384] while the image in question is made to stand on a plain *pīṭha.* Secondly, the former is endowed with ten hands, while our image has only six hands. K.P. Nautiyal[385] has illustated a similar image of the deity, which offers little resemblance to ours.

The fourth image of Camunṇḍā is noticed at Nābhāṅgā. It is carved on a slab of stone (130 cm × 71 cm), but being very awefully mutilated, it presents difficulty in throwing any light on the number of hands. The seat of the squatting image is of a prostrate human body. The visible *āyudha*, held by the deity in one of her hands is a *śūla*. The deity has all the general features of the horrendous aspect and grim appearanee as the earlier ones. To the right of the deity a vulture and to the left a jackal are noticed. The last image of the deity is being preserved in the Pūrva Bhārati Museum, Nalbārī. It is carved on a block of stone. The image was collected from Kārbi-Ānglong. The image has all the usual characteristic feature of cāmuṇḍā.

All these above-mentioned images are carved on stone slabs separately and all of them are *svayaṁpradhāna-mūrtis* (independent images). Generally, Cāmuṇḍā images occur in-*saptamātrikā* (congreries of seven mothers) panels. The images of the Sapta-mātrikās are reported from various regions of the country, except from the Brahmaputra Valley presenting an exceptions. In this region, so far, no independent panel of the Saptamātrikās has been noticed. On the other hand, *Svayaṁpradhānamūrtis* of Cāmuṇḍā are common. In South India *Svayaṁpradhānamūrtis* of the deity are rare. Rao[386] has reproduced two images of the deity, from both panels. In the Kumaon region[387] and Orissa[388], the images of the deity are found independently as well as in panel. Bhattasal[389] has described some images of the deity from Bengal, all being *Svayaṁpradhānamūrtis*. It shows the *Śāktas* of Bengal and Assam preferred to worship the deity independently and the faith in this respect was deep-rooted.

MAHĀKĀLĪ : Mahākālī is regarded as one of the śākta goddess. It was Mahālakshmī that assumed the form of Mahākalī at the time of dissolution, in whom the *tamaguṇa* predominates. The iconographic text of the deity is given in the Caṇḍī portion of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*,[390] according to which she should hold *khaḍga*, *kāpāla*, muṇḍa and *kheṭaka*. Rao,[391] on the basis of some text (vessel) not mentioned, says that she carries in one of her hands a *pātra* (vessel) instead of muṇḍa.

We have come across such an image having almost the same features referred to above. The image is inside the modern Deopānī temple. It is a four-handed image. It holds the to following *ayudhas* form the undernoted mudrā shown clockwise as : *varadamudrā*, *khētaka*, *khaḍga*, and *muṇḍa*. The deity seems to be in the *samapādasthānaka* attitude on a *padma*. The deity has a terrible look. The head of the goddess is bedecked with a *jaṭamukuṭa*. The deity is flanked by two female figures in the *sthānaka* attitude. They are also equally terrible in look. A *prabhāvalī* is arranged just behind the head of Mahākālī. The upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is gone.

This particular image also like the other images from this place discussed by us elsewhere bear the same type of peculiar style which can be placed in A.D. 8th-9th century.[392]

In the ruins at Dabakā (Mikirāti) a peculiar broken sculpture has been noticed.

Only the *adhisthāna* portion of this medium-sized stone icon is remnant. Here the *pretāsana* on which the deity stands is noticed. The back of the prostrate human body is shown turned upward. As the upper portion of the image is missing, its identities is not clear. However, it represents a Śākta divinity of the pre-Āhom age.

It is observed that almost all the śakti images from Assam date from about 9th century downwards. The theme of the representation of the image of Mahiṣamardinī is common. Four, eight, ten and eighteen-handed images of Mahiṣamardinī are noticed in Assam. However, the ten-handed image of the deity seems to have been more popular in that period, as to-day. The images of Cāmuṇḍa have all the weird and uncanny features. But they depict the deity independently and not as one of the Saptatmātrikās, commonly occurring elsewhere in panels in India. Among all the Śakti goddesses, most probably Mahishamardinī was the most popular in old Assam, as in Bengal and some other regions.[393]

Miscellaneous Brahmanical Images

BRAHMĀ : It is well known that Brahmā is an important member of the Hindu Trinty. There are many texts such as, the *Mahābhārata,*[394] *Bṛhat-saṁhita,*[395] *Matsyapurāṇa,*[396] *Vaikhānasāgama,*[397] *Vishnu-dharmōttara,*[398] *Vishnu-purāṇa,*[399] *Amsumadbhedāgama,*[400] *Suprabhedāgama,*[401] *Śilparatna*[402] and the *Rūpamaṇḍana*[403] which give description of the image of Brahmā. Few images of Brahmā are noticed in Assam. A three-faced image of the deity was discovered in Guwahati, now being displayed in the Assam State Museum. The image (53cm × 62cm) is carved out of a block of basalt (?). At the time of its discovery, the image lost the front hands.[404] Now the upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is also gone. Here the deity is made to be in the *sthānaka* attitude on a *pītha* of 11cm in height, decorated with six *padmakośas* (lotus buds). In the middle of these the *vāhana* a *haṁsa* is depicted. The deity makes a *tribhaṅga* pose. He had four hands originally, but the front hands are lost. The right back hand holds a *sruk* (the sacrificial-spoon), while the right front one holds a *sruva* (the sacrificial ladle). It can be guessed that the broken hands might have held a bunch of *kuśa* (a kind of grass) and an *āja-sthāli* (ghee pot) as these are the common *āyudhas* of this deity. The front face of the deity has beard. But if the other two faces of the god have beard is not known. His fourth face is supposed to be hidden on the back side. For this reason, probably, his face is not shown in our icon.

The *jaṭā* of the deity is well executed. Other *alaṁkāras* that deck the person of the god are *kuṇḍalas, keyuras, valayas, upavīta* and *nūpuras*. The *paridhāna* that drapes the lower part of his body is very thin. The *tuṇḍila* (pot belly) of Brahmā is well depicted here. There is a *tilaka* on his forehead. The deity is flanked by two miniature figures. The figure to the right may be identified with a *ṛshi*, while the figure to the left a *bhakta* (devotee). On stylistic consideration, the sculpture may be placed in *c.* A.D. 10th century. The next image of Brahmā (152cm × 76cm) is found at Barpukhurīpāra (Haleśvar) Tezpur. This piece of sculpture is a good example of eastern Indian art. But it is said that the hands of the figure are broken off, in all probability, at the hands of iconoclasts. Here the deity is in *ardhapayankāsana* attitude on a *padma*. Like the former one this is also a three-faced image. Here, as in the former case, the deity has beard. The *jaṭā* of the head and the *tundila* of the deity are clearly shown. Some kinds of *alaṁkāras* and *vastras* are worn by the deity here. On either side a female figure is seen in *āsana* attitude. They should be identified wite *Sāvitrī* and *Sarasvatī*, the consorts of the deity. Below the deity, the *vāhana* is depicted alongwith the *padmakośas* (lotus-buds), as in the earlier case. Behind the head of the image of Brahmā a *prabhā* is arranged. The upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa* is pointed. The figures of the Kīrttimukha and the pair of Vidyādharas usually shown in the *śilāpaṭṭas*, are absent here. Their places are occupied here by five miniature figures of *ṛshis* in the *āsana* attitude. This feature is seen frequently in the *Śena* sculpture of Bengal.[405] Had the hands of the image not been sadly broken, it would have been an excellent piece of art.

None of the image of Brahmā, illustrated by Rao[406] can be compared with our images. Sankalia[407] has described a three-faced and four-armed image of the deity in the *ardhaparyankāsana* attitude like our second image. The form of the deity, illustrated by Banerjea, is however, quite comparable with ours.[408] The seated image of Brahmā, preserved in the Asiatic Society of Bengal, is also quite similar to ours. Three images of the deity are noticed at Tezpur. All of them are partially mutilated. The first image is from Bāmuni hill. It was a fourhanded image of which backhands are broken. The right fronthand holds an *akshamālā*, while the left front one holds an unidentified *āyudha*. It is in the *samapādasthānaka* attitude on a *padma*. A *jaṭa* on the head and usual *alaṁkāras* and *vastras* are seen on the body of the figure of the deity. Two attendant female figures are noticed on either side of the deity. Evidently, they are Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī. In this icon the *vāhana* is not shown. The deity is here bearded but singlefaced. This image is sculptured on a long slab of stone alongwith the images of Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, etc. in a panel.

The third image (94cm × 76cm) of Brahmā is preserved at Cole Park, Tezpur. It is sculptured at the bottom of a long and huge panel of the *avatāras* of Vishṇu. Here the *sthānaka* figure of the deity is in *dvibhanga* attitude on a simple *pīṭha*. Both the hands of the deity are sadly broken. The god has a *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and other usual *alaṁkāras* and *paridhāna*. To the right of the god Sarasvatī holding a *vīnā*, attends upon him and to the left a female figure is seen. Evidently, she is Sāvitrī. Below the deity there is trace of a *haṁsa*, the *vāhana* of the deity. The next one was seen in a panel at the gate of the Donbosco School, Tezpur, now preserved in Cole Park. Like the third images, this is also represented with one face, having beard and two hands. The deity is in a *samapādasthānaka* attitude on a *padma*. The right hand of the figure holds probably a *kamaṇḍalu*. The deity wears a *jaṭāmukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, and *valayas* as *alamkāras* and a *kaṭivastra* as *paridhāna*. On either side human figure is seen in the *sthānaka* attitude. They cannot be precisely identified. Below a trace of the *vāhana* is depicted. Like the above images of the deity this image is also depicted in a panel (in a lintel) with other divinities. But it is smaller in size than the other one.

All these images are more or less similar to each other and considering their style, the first and the second can be placed in between the 10th and 11th centuries and the last two images in *c.* A.D. 10th century. A small image of Brahmā is seen at Mahāmāyāthān in the Mikir hills district. The image is carved on a small slab of granite, the other three sides of which carry the images of Umā-Maheśvara, Surya and Vishṇu. Here the image of Brahmā is two-handed. The *āyudhas*, held by the deity are *sruka* and *kamaṇḍalu*. Here the deity is made to sit in the *ardhaparyankāsana* attitude. The god has three faces, the forth being supposed to be hidden. The front face has a long beard. The *tundila* of the deity is visible. The figure of the deity is decked with a *jaṭamukuṭa* and other usual *alaṁkāras*. Below the *āsana* his *vāhana* is seen. The image is weather exposed. In the Assam State Museum a sadly broken stone image rather the remnant of an image of Brahmā is lying. The piece of stone represents the three faces of Brahmā. From the neck downward, the entire portion is missing. In each of the three heads the god is shown with a *jaṭāmukuṭa*. He has beard on each face and he wears *kuṇḍalas*. Unfortunately, this remnant is also mutilated So far as the style is concerned there is not the iota of doubt that it dates somwhere in the pre-Āhom period. Had it remained undamaged, it would have been a fine art piece.[409] An image of the deity (61cm × 48cm) is noticed at Bhāṅgā Mandir gāon near Dhekiajulī, carved on a block of stone. The deity has three faces which are slightly damaged. The four-armed deity holds *akshamāla* and *kamaṇḍalu* with his lower right and left hand respectively and *sruva* and *sruka* with his upper right and left hand respectivly. The figure bears all the common features of Brahmā. There attendants are not shown. An image of the deity is also reported from Chāng Choki Barnāmghar (Kāwaimari). It occurs, like the image of the same deity from Cole Park, in a *dvāraśirapaṭṭi* of a temple in a panel along with attandants as well as some Navagraha figures. Stylistically these figures may be placed in between 9th and 11th century according to N.D. Choudhary.[410]

Indra is considered as one of the *aṣṭadikapālas* (presiding chief of the eight sides—north south and the like). He is regarded as the guardian deity of the eastern quarter. The Mahābhārata,[411] *Brhat-saṁhita*,[412] *Matsyapurāna*,[413] the *Vaikhānasāgama*,[414] *Vishnupurāna*,[415] *Aṁsumadhhedāgama*[416] etc. contain descriptions of the image of this deity. Only three images of Indra have been discovered in this region. The first image (44cm × 23cm) is placed in the Assam State Museum.[417] It was also found in Guwahati alongwith an image of Brahmā. Here the deity stands on 10 cm high *pīṭha*. It is a two-handed image of the deity. The right hand of the god forms *varada-mudrā*, while the left hand displays *abhaya-mudrā*. The person of the deity is decked with *kirīṭamukuṭa*, *puṣpakuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *keyūras*, *valayas*, *yajñopavīta* and *nūpuras*. He wears a *kaṭimekhalā* and short *kaṭivastra*. His belly is slightly protruding. The male attendant to the left of the god may be ṛshi holding a *kamaṇḍalu* and a bunch of *kuśa* in his hands. The female figure to the right of the deity may be Śachī or Indrānī, the consort of Indra. She holds a *chowri* (?) and some fruit. Above the head of the deity in the middle of the *śilāpaṭṭa*, there is a Kīrttimukha, flanked by two Vidyādharas. On either side of the deity on the *śilāpaṭṭa*, there is a miniature female figure. Below the *pīṭha* of the deity, there stands Airāvata, the elephent *vāhana* of the god.

The peculiarity of the image lies in that, just above the head of the deity (below the Kīrttimukha) there is a fiveheaded *sarpa* (snake) in the form of a canopy. Generally, the hooded canopy of a *sarpa* is seen in the image of Balarāma. "It is just possible that here an attempt is made to identify Indra with Balarāma."[418] In fact the appelation Upendra, given to Vishṇu, indicates Indra as an elder brother of Vishnu and is thus identifiable with Balarāma.[419] The deity is represented here in an elegant posture. The image, stylistically, may belong to *c*. A.D. 10th century. This chances to be a rare icon of Indra.[420] The next image of Indra (32cm × 16 cm) is in the Narakāsura hill near Guwahati and is now preserved in Assam State Museum. Alongwith this image some other images are also found. But the one of Indra in bronze is the most beautiful image (Fig. 65) in the group. Here the deity is made to sit astriding *Airāvata*. As in the former case, here also, the deity forms *varadamudrā* and an *abhayamudrā* in the right and left hands. The deity is decked with *kirīṭamukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *keyūras*, *valayas*, *upavīta* and *nūpuras*. A *kaṭimekhalā* and a *kaṭivastra* are seen draping the lower part of the deity. The deity is flanked by two female attendants bearing each a chowri, an unidentified *āyudha*. They are in the *sthānaka* attitude each on a *padma*. Airāvata, who faces the front stands on a *padma* too. An *aṅkuśa* not touched by the deity, is simply placed on the head of Airāvata. Below the *pīṭha* a male devotee or donor is seen in a reverential pose forming *añjalihasta-mudrā*.

Behind the deity, a decorative *ādhāra* (frame) stands. Above it and behind the head of the deity, a decorative *prabhā* is arranged. Again above the *prabhā*, *chhatra* (umbrella) is placed. All these decorative motifs are the characteristic features of the Pāla-period bronze sculptures.[421] However, to our knowledge, such a beatiful bronze image of Indra is neither found in Bengal nor in Bihar. The sitting posture of the image can be compared with that of the stone image of Indra from Chidambaram, illustrated by Rao.[422] From stylistical point of view, this piece of art can be placed in A.D. 10th-11th century. The last icon of the deity is a rock-cut image (56 cm × 31 cm), found on a huge boulder on the bank of the Brahmaputra near Pāṇḍughāt, Guwahati. Like the other two images of the deity, discussed above, this image also has two hands. Here the deity is made to stand in the *samabhaṅgasṭhānaka* attitude. The *āyudhas*, held in the hands, are almost worn out. However, with close observation, we can make out that in the right hand the deity holds a *vajra*, while in the left he holds a *padma*. The god wears a *mukuṭa* (which is worn out), *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *valayas*, *upavīta* and a long *mālā* (like *vaijayantī*) as *alaṁkāras* and *kaṭimekhalā* and *kaṭi-vastra* as *paridhāna*. He is flanked by two female attendants, holding each a *chowri*. Below the indistinct *pīṭha*, Airāvata is beautifully depicted and on either side of Airāvata a devotee is seen in the *añjalihasta* pose and in a reverential attitude. Above the head of Indra a Kīrttimukha and on both the corners of the *śilāpaṭṭa*, two Vidyādharas are seen in their usual way. Stylistically, it may be placed somewhere in A.D. 9th century. It seems, the icon is not properly finished and is affected by the water of the river. Beside this image, an image of Sūrya is noticed, sculptured in the same rock, facing the river.

A beautiful stone image of Indra is noticed in the ruins at Mālinīthān, now in Arunachal Pradesh bordering Assam. Here the deity is shown seated on Airāvata, his *vāhana* in *mahārājalīlāsana* attitude. The right hand of the deity is seen rising up. The *āyudha* of the hand is not clear. The left hand is partly broken off. So, the *āyudha* is also lost. The deity is attended by his consorts. The *śilāpaṭṭa* of this image is beautifully done. At the top of the *śilāpaṭṭa* the figure of kīrttimukha is noticed (Fig. 78).

KUBERA : He is the lord of the northern quarter. The *Mahābhārata*,[423] *Bṛhat-saṁhita*,[424] *Matsya-purāṇa*,[425] *Vaikhānasāgama*,[426] *Vishṇudharmōttara*,[427] *Amśumadbedāgama*,[428] and some other āgamic authorities[429] give descriptions of the iconographic representation of *Kubera*. In Assam, the image of this deity, like those of Agni and Indra, is very rare. In the whole of the Brahamputra Valley the iconographic representation of *Kubera* is exemplified by only one image. The provenance of the image is an unkown place in the Kārbi-Ānglong District, now forming part of the collections of the Assam State Museum. The image is carved on a block of granite (34 cm × 28 cm). Here the deity is made to sit in the *mahārājalīlā* pose,[430] placing the left leg horizontally on a simple *āsana* and putting the right leg vertically on the same. In his right hand the deity holds a *pātra* (vessel,) and in the left hand a *dhanakōṣa* (bag-of riches). The person of the deity is decked with a *jaṭāmukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *upavīta*, *etc*. The right hand of the god rests on the raised knee, while holding the aforesaid *āyudha*. The *tuṇḍila* (pot-belly) of the deity is quite distinct, as the image is in low relief. No attendants of the god are represented in this image, nor his consort. The *vāhana* is also marked absent. The image of the god, however, has a grace and serenity like the 10th century icon of *Kubera* from Khajurāho, reproduced by Kramrisch.[431] However, on stylistic consideration, our image may be taken to be older than the image from Khajurāho.

KĀMADEVA : Kāmadeva, the god of love, has been described in the *Mahābhārata*,[432] *Matsya-purāṇa*,[433] *Vis'ṇudharmōttara*,[434] and *Śilparatna*.[435] The *Vaikhānasāgama*[436] also describes him under the name of Madana. Images of Kāmadeva are mostly seen in South India. In Northen and Eastern India icons of this deity are few and far between.

An image carved in stone and obtained from Sibsagar, is preserved in the Assam State Museum. This *sṭhānakamūrti* of the god is in the *dvibhaṅga* pose. The *pīṭha* is a *padma*. It is carved on a block of granite (122 cm × 92 cm). The deity is endowed with two hands. With the right hand, he holds the upper end of the *bāṇa* (arrow) of *mṛiṇāla* (lotus-stalk). While gripping over the *bāṇa*, the hand touches the chest. The lower end of the same *bāṇa* is in the grip of the left hand, which simply hangs down. In between the left side of the body and the left arm the *dhanu* is kept vertically. The lower end of it is on the *pīṭha* on which the deity stands and the upper end rises up straightaway. The person of the deity is adorned with the usual *alaṁkāras*.

The deity is depicted here without his consort, *Rati*. The facial grace and keenness are clearly expressed. The *śilāpaṭṭa* is equal to the figure in height and the breadth of the same is curtailed. Therefore, the *śilāpaṭṭa* does not possess any scope for decoration, which we commonly meet with in the case of any image of the mediaeval period, specially, from Bengal and Assam. Whatever place has been left in the *śilāpaṭṭa* is kept blank. Stylistically, the image may be placed in *c*. A.D. 11th century.

This is an image of peculiar nature, as the deity is not shown with his consort ; and hence, we have little doubt with regard to the identification.[437] In southern India Kāmadeva is sculptured mostly alongwith his consort. Rao[438] has produced an image of the deity, where the consort is not shown. But the facial expression and other decorative details are quite different from those of our image. Moreover, this South Indian image has four hands, while our image has only two hands.

GAṄGĀ AND YAMUNĀ : Gaṅgā and Yamunā, the two river goddesses, were derived from the akshis (tree spirits). The description of the images of these goddesses is available in the works like the *Vaikhānasāgama*[439] and the *Vishṇudharmōttara*.[440] Kalidāsa also has mentioned these two goddesses in his *Kumārasaṁbhava*.[441] The *Mahābhārata*[442] includes the description of Gaṅgā only. True to the tradition in India, images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā were made to flank the *dvāras* (doorways) of temples in Assam also. We have noticed two *dvāras* of ruined temples, depicting the images of these two river goddesses.

The first *dvāra* is noticed in a ruined temple at Daparvatīā near Tezpur. Both the images of the deities in high relief have been placed on the lower parts of the two *śākhās* of the *dvāra*. On the right of its own *dvāra-śākhā*, occurs the figure of Gaṅgā (Fig. 13) at the bottom. Here the deity stands certainly on a *makara* (crocodile), which has been broken off. The left leg of the deity carries the weight of the body, while the right leg simply rests on the *pīṭha*. Both the hands hold a *mālā* in a graceful pose. The *keśabandha* of the goddess is beautifully arranged. The *alaṁkāras* of the deity are *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *valayas* and *nūpuras*. She wears a *kaṭimekhalā* around the waist. Behind the head of the goddess a round *prabhāvalī* is seen. To the right of the deity's head two flying *haṁsas* (geeses), symbolic of the river goddess, and close by, at the same level, a *nāgī* are seen in the *añjalihasta* pose. On either side of the deity, there stand (on the same *pīṭha* on which the deity stands) two female figures, who hold a *chowri* each and attend upon the goddess. Just in front of the attendant to the left, there must have stood another attendant in *ālīḍhāsana*, as in the case of Yamunā, which we shall subsequently show. The figure of this attendant is gone alongwith the *pīṭha*.

The left *dvaraśākha* contains the figure of Yamunā (Fig. 14) at the bottom. Here the deity is made to stand on a *kūrma* (tortoise), which is partially broken. The weight of the body of the deity is carried by the right leg, while the left leg simply rests on the *pīṭha*. Both the hands of the deity carry a *mālā* in an elegant posture. Like Gaṅgā, this goddess has a beautiful *keśabandha* on the head. The person of the deity is decked with the usual alamkāras. She wears a *kaṭimekhalā* around the waist. As in the case of Gaṅgā, here also near the head of the deity two flying *haṁsas* are well depicted. Here they are depicted to the left of the head of the deity. At the same level a *nāgī* is depicted in the *añjalihasta* pose. Behind the head of the goddess a plain and round *prabhāvalī* is shown, as in the case of Gaṅgā. The deity is flanked by two female attendants, standing on the same *pīṭha* and holding a *chowri* each. Another female figure is seen in *ālīḍha* posture in front of the deity. The figure holds a flat receptacle containing flowers.

The faces and heads of both the figures of the deities are round and their standing poses and the style of holding the *mālās* are quite identical as amongst themselves. The excellence of the figures lies in the fact that their limbs are well proportionate and quite refined. Their general features are quite identical with each other and both the figures of the deities are symmetrical.

According to R.D. Banerjea,[443] this *dvara* belongs to the great school of art which existed at Pātaliputra and Banaras in A.D. 5th and 6th centuries. He is also supported by other scholars.[444] These two figures of the river goddesses can be taken as the product of the Sāranāth school, because they attain full and soft roundness, and breathe an atmosphene of complete ease and serenity, their bodies shedding off all toughness. All this is achieved with the help of a soft and delicate modelling, an almost imperceptible gliding, and smoothly flowing and melting line.[445] In fact, in other words, these figures of Gaṅgā and Yamunā have enhanced the reputation of the Sārnāth school.

K.L. Barua[446] opines that the present images appear to have the characteristic poses of figures of the Hellenistic art. Barua's view seems to be correct because, the standing poses of the present figures of Gaṅgā and Yamunā can be easily compared with those of Venus of Milo (1st-2nd century B.C.)[447] and Venus of Cyrenaico.[448] The same pose is depicted in the painting of a figure from Ceylon belonging to A.D. 5th century.[449] The posture of the main figure of the toilet scene depicted in the painting in Cave No. 17, Ajanta,[450] also resembles the poses of the image in question.

The image of Gaṅgā in the *sthānaka* attitude on a *makara* (crocodile) from Besnagar, belonging to the early Gupta period, is heavy, rounded and tough, *i e.* the image has all the characteristics of the Mālwā school of sculpture.[451] So, it cannot be compared with our Gaṅgā image. The images sculptured on the *dvāra* of the Deogarh temple[452] can be contrasted with ours. The main difference of these two images with ours lies in that the images from Deogarh are carved at the top of the *dvara-śākhās*, while our images are carved at the bottom. The standing position of the figures of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, depicted on the *dvāra* from Tigovā,[453] are almost the same as the present cases ; but they do not hold *mālās*. On the other hand, two trees are depicted behind the figures of the deities. Moreover, they are very large and heavy and they stand almost erect.

However, the image Gaṅgā from Iśvarīpur, Bengal,[454] belonging to A.D. 10th century, can be compared with our image of Gaṅgā. The image from Iśvarīpur holds a *mālā* with both of its hands and stands on a *makara* in a posture which is quite similar to that of our image of Gaṅgā. From the *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image we can make out that the Bengal image is carved independently, and not on a *dvara-śākhā*. From this piece of sculpture we can infer that the *sthānaka* posture and the pose of holding a *mālā* of this image were derived from the style of earlier ones from Daparvatiā. Another two images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā are seen in a *dvāra* which is preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. They are comparable with our images, in so far as the *sthānaka* posture and the style of holding a *mālā* are concerned. But they are not as refined as ours. Therefore, it will not be wrong, if we think, to opine that such images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā are yet to be discovered in India which can challenge the sensitiveness, the sense of proportion and elegance of the Daparvatiā images.

The second dvāra, brought from a ruined temple of Mājgāon, is now preserved at the residence of Late Prabodh Chandra Baruah of Mājgāon, Tezpur. At the bottom of both the *śākhās* of the *dvāra*, we notice the figures of Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Dvārapāla and Nandī.

The right *śakha* carries the figures of Gaṅgā (Fig. I), Dvārapāla and Nandı. All are in the *sthānaka* posture and all are equal in height, *i.e.* two feet. Gaṅgā is seen holding a *mālā* in the *tribhaṅga* posture. Below the deity her *vāhana makara* is depicted. She seems to have a *jaṭā* (?) on her head. To the left of the figure of Gaṅgā stands the figure of the Dvārapāla in the *tribhaṅga* pose, holding a *triśūla*. The other *ayudha*, held in one of his hands, is not clear. To the extreme left or to the left of the figure of Dvārapāla, Nandı is depicted holding a *daṇḍa* with both his hands. The face of this figure seems to be slightly different—it is longer. The figures of the Dvārapāla and Nandī seem to stand on *padmas*.

The left *dvāra-śākhā* at its bottom has the figures in the same way. Yamunā is depicted to the right of the Dvārapāla who stands in between Yamunā and Nandī. The *vāhana* of Yamunā is a *kūrma* (tortoise), dimly depicted. She also holds a *mālā* in the *tribhaṅga* attitude like Gaṅgā. The figure of Gaṅgā turns slightly towards the entrance of the *dvara*, while Yamunā stands in the same manner, slightly turning towards her right.[455] Sylistically it can be placed in *c*. A.D. 10th century. Another *dvāraśākhā* lying at the site of the ruins of Mājgāon, shows a figure of Gaṅgā, Dvarapāla and Nandī (in anthropomorphic form). Here the deity is made to stand on a *makara* in *tribhaṅga* attitude holding a mālā, with her hands. The other *dvāraśakha* evidently showing the figure of Yamunā could not be traced in the ruins.

N.D. Choudhary[456] has noticed an image of Yamunā in the ruins of Saṅkhādevī near Rājbārī (Jogījāan). Locally the image is' known as Śaṅkhādevī. Here the deity is made to sit on a *kūrma* in *lalitāsana* posture. With her raīsed right hand, the goddess holds a circular flower while displaying *varadamudrā*. Her left hand is in *bhūmisparśamudrā*. Two figures of Matsyakanyā in hybrid form, from both sides over her head holding each a ghaṭa and pouring water on the head of the deity are seen.

Now, we see that both these river goddesses from Mājgāon are depicted here in the same way as the figures of the deities, depicted in the Daparvatiā *dvāra*, some two miles away from this place. The standing posture and the style of holding the *mālā* of these two figures are similar to those of Daparvatiā. But at Daparvatiā the figures of Dvārapāla and Nandī are absent, and the figures from Mājgāon do not possess that much beauty depicted in the figures of Daparvatiā. In fact, the present ones are rough ; moreover, they are weather roughened. Stylistically, these figures may be placed in A.D. 9th century. Here the peculiarity is that alongwith the river goddesses figures of Dvārapālas and Nandī are seen. The figure of the deity from Śaṇkhādevī, however, is quite different from the figures of Yamunā from Daparvatiā, and Mājgāon.

MANASĀ : The snake-goddess Manasā, who was married to the hermit Jaratkāru and became the mother of Āstika, is generally identified with the sister of the serpent king Vāsuki, according to the *Mahābhārata*.[457] Actually speaking, this is a confusing deity. She is sometimes said to be the daughter of Śiva. In Buddhism she can be identified with Jāṅguli.[458] In this connection, Bhattasa i has quoted a *dhyāna* the source of which is not given.[459] Again, she is identifiable with Sarasvatī, according to certain *dhyāna* from the *Brahma-Vaivarttapurāṅa* (*Śri-Kṛishna-janma Khaṇḍam*, Ch. 51), quoted by Bhattasali.[460] "In the commentary of *Kāśirām Vāchaspati* on *Tithyaddi Tattvam* by Raghunandana, Section 79"[461] a *dhyāna* is given regarding the description of Manasādevī. According to it, the deity should bring a child on her lap. She should be attended by huge *sarpas*. She should have prominent bosoms and should hold two *sarpas* in her two hands. Certain images of this deity have been found in Bengal and Assam which tally with the description given above, as we shall show. The images of Manasā, very probably, are not met with anywhere in India except in Assam and Bengal or in eastern region. The Brahmaputra Valley yields a few images of Manasā.

The first image comes from Guwahati. Now, it is in the Assam State Museum. It is a miniature bronze image. Here the deity is seated on a *padma* in *lalitāsana* with the right leg pendant and the left leg bent. This two-handed deity in her right hand holds a fruit in *varada-mudrā* and holds a child on her lap with the left hand. One *sarpa* is seen coiling round her right hand and another around the left. There is a *chatra* (like a serpent's hood) over her head. A very small figure which cannot be distingusihed, is seen below on the backside of the image. The person of the deity is ornamented in the usual way.

Now, we see that the identification of this image with goddess Manasā is confirmed by the iconographic description, given above. Stylistically, it appears, this splendid icon may be assigned to *c*. A.D. 10th century and not to *c*. A.D. 12th century as maintained by Choudhury.[462]

The second image of the deity from Narakāsur hill is very small. The image is now being preserved in the Assam State Museum. It is carved on a piece of black basalt. Like the previous image, the present one also is seated in *lalitāsana* with the right leg pendant and the left leg horizontally placed on the *padmāsana*. This two-handed image holds probably a fruit in *varadahasta-mudrā*, while keeping the hand on the right knee to rest. The left hand holds a *sarpa*. Above the head of the deity a seven-hooded *sarpa* is canopying. The two hoods of the *sarpa* seem to be lost. To the right of the deity a ṛshi (a bearded male figure evidently of Jaratkāru) is seen sitting in *utkaṭikāsana* attitude, while to the left of the deity a figure holding an unidentified *āyudha* is seen sitting in *lalitāsana*.[463] A *kumbha* is seen below the *adhiṣṭhāna*. The lower portion of the body of the *sarpa*, held by the deity, seems to rest in the *kumbha*.

This image is comparable with the one from Bengal, illustrated by Bhattasali.[464] That image is also seated in *lalitāsana* and holds a *sarpa* and a fruit like that of ours. As in our image, in that case also we notice the canopied *sarpa* above the head of the deity. The image, brought for comparison, also has a ṛshi figure to the right of the deity and a female(?) seated figure to the left. A *kumbha* is seen below the *āsana* of the deity in the image from Bengal, as in ours.

A very fine specimen of Manasā image (22 cm × 12 cm) in stone is at Baraṅgābārī. It is installed in the Kalyānī *devālaya* (temple) at the place. Here the deity is made to sit in *lalitāsana*, hanging her right leg down. With her right hand, she holds something and forms *varada-mudrā*. Her left hand holds a *sarpa*. Over the head of the goddess there are seven hoods of *sarpa* forming a canopy. To the right at the waist level of the deity, there is the emaciated small figure of Jaratkaru, while to the left side of the deity is depicted a small figure which may be identified as Āstika, the son of the goddess or as Vāsuki. Below it two female figures are depicted in *añjalihasta-mudrā*. The *Śilāpaṭṭa* behind the figure of the deity is pointed. The stylistic beauty of this sculpture leads us to determine its date sometime in A.D. 10th-11th century. This image compares well with the image of the goddess from Bengal, illustrated by Bhattasali[465] and Banerji.[466]

Another stone image carved in the same style is noticed[467] at Phulbārī Devālaya in Sonitpur district. Here the figure of the deity is sculptured alongwith the other two figures of Jarat Kāru and Āstika in the same style as in the image of the deity from Baraṅgābārī described above. In this sculpture the traditional figure of Kīrttimukha flanked by two figures of Vidyādhara are depicted nicely on the pointed *śilāpaṭṭa*. Similar miniature image in the stone are reported from Visnuthān and Lakshmīthan in Madhabpahar near Kāmrup. They belong to the same period—10th-11th century.

The next image of Manasā (165 cm × 65 cm) is very interesting and peculiar. It is found in a tea-garden near Śilghāt (Fig. 73). A photograph of it is published by Bhattasali[468] and B.K. Barua.[469] Now this image has been removed to the Assam State Museum for better preservation.

This piece of sculpture is carved on a block of loose stone. Here the deity is in the *samapādasthānaka* attitude on a *padma*. The right hand of the deity holds a fruit(?) while playing in *varada-hasta-mudrā*. The *āyudha* of the left hand holds a pot which is not quite clear. The deity seems to look a little downward. She is decked with a *jaṭa-mukuṭa* and all other usual *alamkāras*. To the right of the deity a female attendant is carved in the *sthānaka* attitude. The *āyudhas* held by her are not clear. To the left a female figure is depicted. It holds a *vinā*(?). Below the *padma-pīṭha* an elephant is clearly depicted as the *vāhana* of the deity. To the left of the elephant a miniature figure is depicted in the *añjalihasta* pose. Above the head of the figure of the deity, at the point of *śilāpaṭṭa* a Kīrttimukha is beautifully executed. Here the places of Vidyādharas, usually met with in other sculptures, are occupied by two nāgas or nāginīs, who are depicted in hybrid forms, *i.e.*, the upper part is sculptured in human form, while the lower portion of the body is sculptured in *sarpa* form. The lower portion of these *sarpas* come down along both the borders of the *śilāpaṭṭa*. Just above the head of the deity a five-hooded *sarpa* is seen canopying her.

This unique icon of Manasā may, from the stylistic point of view, be placed to c. A.D. 12th century. But the presence of the elephant as the *vāhana* of the deity has created a confusion. However, Bhattasali has taken the trouble to find out an appropriate *dhyāna* from *Brahma-vaivartta-purāna*[470] as we have spoken of already. In that *dhyāna* the *vāhana* of the goddess is denoted by the term "*nàgendra*". Ordinarily, this term would mean "a huge snake". But *naga* also means a *gaja* (elephant). Therefore, in this image the sculptor did not make any mistake in carving the figure of an elephant as the *vāhana* of Manasā.[471]

At Śri-Sūrya Pahar, a rock-cut twelve armed female figure is seen along with some other deities at the site (Fig. 33). Here the deity is in *Samapādasthānaka* attitude. The āyudhas held by the deity is not at all clear as the condition of the rock has deteriorated. The breasts of the figures also have almost worn out. Above the head of the deity a seven-hooded snake is noticed. However, it is doubtful to identify it as Manasā.[472] In the Assam State Museum a mutilated image of Manasā from Bhāitbārī is noticed. This terracotta sculpture has its lower part broken off. A snake-hood above the deity is clearly seen.

VIDYĀDHARA, KINNARA, APSARĀ AND DVĀRAPĀLA : These heavenly beings or Demigods except Dvārapāla, are described in the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*,[473] *Matsyapurāṇa*,[474] *Vaikhānasāgama*,[475] *Vishṇudharmōttarapurāṇa*,[476] *Mānasāra*,[477] *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*,[478] *Jainālaṅkāra*,[479] *Abhinnayadarpaṇa* (A.D. 13th century),[480] *Amara*,[481] *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi*[482] and *Rūpavidyā*.[483] The *Mānasāra* gives the desciption of Gandharvas and Vidyādharas. They should be in a flying posture, and they are depicted standing, they should play on an instrument. They may be depicted in other poses too.[484]

In Assam almost in every work of sculpture, belonging to the medieval period, depicts the figures of Vidyādhara as attendants of their main deity. In all the cases, when they are represented, their figures are carved on the upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa* and flank the Kīrttimukha sculptured at the top of the *śilāpaṭṭa*. When they are wrought in any sculpture, their number is always two and rarely one.

There is a beautiful carving of a hovering Vidyadhara on a stone image of Vishṇu from Gosāijuri with an *uttarīya* (scarf), held in hands in the *antariksha* (ethereal) region, indicated by a circle with indented edges as in the Pāla representations.[485] At Tarābasā in the part of the *śilāpaṭṭa* of a Vishṇu image two flying Vidyādharas, with flutes in the hands, are noticed.[486] Just below the representations of these two figures, two other figures of Gandharva are nicely executed. At Deoparvat a beautiful figure of Vidyādhara is noticed. Its facial type is local while the decorative and anatomical details of it reveal the late Gupta and Pala features.[487] Almost all the images of Brahmā, Indra, Vishṇu, Umā-Mahēśvara and others belonging to a period ranging from A.D. 9th to the early part of the 13th century, now being preserved in the Assam State Museum, have each a pair of Vidyādhara figures in flying attitude on the upper part of their *śilāpaṭṭas*. Figures of Vidyādharas are also seen in a number of images of different deities seen in different places, such as, Baḍgaṅgā, Mikirāti, Mothorbārī, Nowgaon, Tezpur, *etc*.

Svayaṁpradhānamurtis of Vidyādharas are also noticed in Assam. An excellent piece of sculpture of this variety has been noticed in the Assam State Museum. The image is carved on a piece of granite. The figure is in a flying posture, holding a *mālā* with both the hands. It wears a beautiful *kirīṭamukuṭa, kuṇḍalas and hāras* as *alamkāras* and a *kaṭimekhalā* and a *kaṭivastra* of a thin fabric as *paridhāna*. The smile of the face and the elegance of the flying posture of the figure are gracefully expressed. The figure is sculptured inside a sunken *padma* whose *dalas* (petals) are depicted clearly and which is encircled by an oblong line. The physiognomy and the sense of proportion expressed in the sculpture show that the style of this piece of work of art goes very near to the style of the sculptures of Bengal in the Pāla period. Another image of Vidyādhara (rock-cut) is noticed in the Kāmākhyā hill. It is sculptured in the same formula in granite rock near the western *toḍana* of the Kāmākhyā temple. Looking at the sculpture, which is the product of some art master, one can easily guess that it is nothing but the copy of the earlier one. Stylistically, they may be dated to *c*. A D. 11th century. Like the earlier one, it is also a *svayampradhānamurti* of Vidyādhara. Another image of Vidyādhara, depicted singly in flying posture on a block of granite, is noticed in the Assam State Museum. It is also a beautiful figure of this demi-god. A figure of Vidyādhara holding a *mālā* in its both hands and hovering in the sky has been noticed sculptured in a slab of stone at Deopānī.[488]

At Tarāvasā on the *śilāpaṭṭa* of a Vishṇu image along with the figure of Vidyādhara, referred to above, two figures of Gandharva are nicely sculptured. The figure to the right is seen with wings and playing on flute and the figure to the left is depicted in dancing posture.[489] Figures of Gandharvas are also noticed at Śingrī.[490] Several figures of Gandharvas and Kinnaras appear as ornamentations on the *dvāra-śākhās* scattered in the places like Śingri; Kāmākhyā, Chārduār[491] and other places. In Guwahati three broken friezes representing figures of Gandharvas were found. Now they are in the Assam State Museum. These friezes carrying about three or four figures in the flying posture must have been employed in some temples as superstructures.

In Guwahati a Kinnarī figure (?) is seen having four hands.[492] This four-handed figure holds a *bāṇa* and *dhanu* in its two hands ; the *āyudhas* of the other two hands are not clear. The figure seems to be in a dancing pose. We have not noticed any figure of a Kinnara, so far, in Assam.

Figures of Apsarās (fairy nymphs) are also found in Assam. A few (Fig. 62) sculptures of Apsarās are preserved in the Assam State Museum. All these female figures are realistic in their beauty. All of them are in the *sthānaka* posture. In all these cases, they are made two-handed. But their hands are mutilated. They have a *keśabandha* each on their heads. They wear all the usual *alaṁkāras* and *vastras* and look young. Specially, one of them is sculptured with attractive youthful beauty. Two broken rūpapaṭṭikā (friezes) from Numaligarh, now preserved in the Assam State Museum depicting busts of Apsarās are worth mentioning (Fig. 47). Their faces are long and smiling with feminine beauty. Each of these figures of demi-gods has a *tilaka* on the forehead. They are in flying posture holding padmas in either hands. The figures of their hands are also nicely done. Like the *rupapaṭṭikās* (friezes) showing figures of of Gandharvas from Guwahati described above, these broken *rupapaṭṭikās* (frieze) also must have been employed in the superstructures of the same temples.

Dvārapālas[493] and Dvārapālikās are, generally, figured on either *śākhā* of the *dvāra* of a temple. We have come across several such figures, who are meant for guarding the temples. At Baḍgaṅgā a life-size figure of Dvārapāla is seen. It is sculptured on a rock just near the Baḍgaṅgā rock inscription and here the figure is shown standing and holding a *triśula*. This is the oldest of all the Dvārapāla figure in Assam. Considering the style of the head-gear, *sthāṇaka* posture and anatomy of the figure', it can easily be taken as an old sculpture, dating back to *c*. A.D. 6th century or so. At Mājgāon, Tezpur, at the bottom of the *dvārā-śākhās*, referred to already, two figures of Dvārapāla are noticed. Both of them hold a *triśula* each. In each case we see that the Dvārapālas are depicted in between the figures of Gangā (in one case Yamunā) and Nandī, in the human form, indicating that the *dvāra* belonged to a Śiva temple. Stylistically, they belong to A.D. 9th century. In the ruins of Gāchtal, on fragmented *dvāra-śākhās* were noticed figures—some holding *kamaṇḍalus* and others of *dvārapālas* holding Śaivite symbols, such as *śula* and *pāśa*.[494] Sometimes here the Dvārapālas have four hands in which case the *dhakkā* or the kettle-drum is held in one of the hands. At Śilbori ruins in the Darrang district was seen a beautiful image of Dvārapāla at the bottom of a dvāraśākhā. It is in the *tribhaṅga-sthānaka* attitude. With its two hands it holds a *dhanu* and a *bāṇa*. The image is slightiy defaced and is now removed to the Dalgāon police station compound.

A figure of Dvāra-pālikā, now in the Assam State Museum, is depicted in the *tribhaṅga* pose holding a *khaḍga* and wearing *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *kaṭimekhalā* and a *kaṭivastra*. Some *dvāra-śākhās* from Deopānī, now broken, show Dvārapālikās holding the *khaḍga*, and wearing *karaṇḍamukuṭa* and *patrakuṇḍala*. The Dvārapālas from the ruins of Ākāśīgaṅgā are shown holding *śula* and *pāśa*. Some figures of Dvārapāla are seen in a ruined Vishṇu temple, North Guwahati. Here the figures of Dvārapālas stand on both legs, signifying the idea of alertness and firmness. They carry a *daṇḍa* (?) each and keep one hand in the *kaṭyabilambita* pose. The *dvāra-śākhās* found at Mahādeochal and Budhagosāithān carry the figures of Dvārapālas, which bear a *dhanu* and a *bāṇa* each. Similar figures are noticed at the ruins of Changchuki, Maudāṅgā, Āmtal, Mathorbāri, Śingri and other places.[495] Sometimes we see, along with Dvārapālas, a figure of Pujārī (priest) or Pujārinī (priestess) holding naivedya and figures of Narttakī (danceuse) in the *nṛttya* (dancing) pose also. At Mahādeochal figures of Dvārapāla, Pujārinī and Narttakī are noticed at the bottom of a *dvāra-śākhā*.[496] Also at Chāṅgchuki similar figures are noticed.[497] A broken *dvāra-śākhā*,[498] lying at Sirājulī, shows these figures. Here the figure of Dvārapāla is shown as very strong with big eyes, moustache and holding a *daṇḍa*, which rests on his shoulder. In fact, these figures are plentiful and lying here and there.

FOUR ICONS (with folkish treatment) : The Assam State Museum's bronze collection from Kāhilīpārā (Narakāsur hill) includes four peculiar but very interesting images. All of them are executed in round plaques in relief. The first plaque (oval-shaped) shows a male human figure standing in *samapādasthānaka* attitude on a figure (?). The figure has four hands. The *āyudhas* of the upper right and lower right hands are a *khaḍga* and an *akshamālā*. The *āyudhas* of the left hands are a *śaṅkha* and an indistinct object (lotus ?). The figure wears a semidiaphanous drapery. It has a *jaṭā* on its head, an erect penis and wears an *upavīta*. The plaque has a few inscribed letters. A few letters can be noticed to the left of the figure. B.N. Mukherjee[499] after giving a reading of these letters says "it referers to the figure on the plaque as the image of Vanahari made (?) (i.e., donated ?) by a Rājyapāla (protector of the realm of Nabhāsa.)" It appears from iconographical point of view, that the figures has Śaiva affiliation, if it does not represent Śiva at all.

The next plaque shows a two armed made figure standing in the *samapādasathānaka* attitude on an ass (?). The figure has matted hair. The right hand helds a *gadā* (?), white the left hand grasps a leash binding the animal (or holds a noose falling on the back of it). It also carries an inscription. Mukherjee[500] is of the opinion that it refers to it as the image of Vijayaka Haradeva. Like the previous image it has also a erect penis and it has Śaiva affiliation.

Third plaque shows a four-armed female figure standing in the same style on a buffalo. The upper two hands of the figure hold a *triśula* and *cakra*, while the lower ones grasp a *gadā* and a noose or leash to which the *vāhana* of the figure is tied. The figure has a *mukuṭa* on its head. The identily of the figure is not very clear. It may represent yamī (the female associate of yama or Dhūmrornā, the consort of yama), as we think and extend our support to Mukherjee and A Bhattacharya[501] in this regard.

The last one is very interesting and an extremely rare type of icon. The round plaque shows here a human face with a cap on its head springing from the head of a horned buffalo. The sculpture may represent Mahishāsura, the buffalo demon, who assumed human form after it was beheaded in the form of an animal. But, because of the presence of the *trinetra* (the third eyed), one at one time is inclined to identify it as Durgā. Whatever may be its identification, it must be admitted that such type of icon is extremely rare (Fig. 52).

Mukherjee likes to date the figures in a period ranging from A.D. 9th to 12th century on the basis of the palaeograpy of the inscriptions on two plaques. But it appears to us that the palaeography of the inscription should rather belong to A.D. 9th-10th century. D.C. Sircar[502] is also of the same opinion. All these pieces of sculptures do not portray classical Pala art of 9th/10th century but they bear folk element.[503] We cannot, however, support the view of Mukherjee who says that these art pieces belong to the Kāmarūpa school. These sculptures can never be related to the icons of Vishṇu from Deopāni Mikirāti or Śri-Sūrya Pāhār, which were executed in the classical formula and which are placed by him in so-called Kāmarūpa school.

ṚSHI : Images of ṛshis are found sculptured on stone in some places in Assam. In the Assam State Museum a few images of ṛshis have been preserved. The first image (58 cm×49 cm) is from Śibsagar. This image represents a bearded figure as standing on a *padma* in the *samapādasthānaka* attitude. Its left hand holds a *tridaṇḍa*. The right hand hangs down and holds a *kamaṇḍalu*. The head of the figure is decked with a *jaṭā*. On the body of the figure is seen an *upavīta*. The private part of the figure is covered with a small *kaupiṇa*. This image may, on stylistic grounds, be placed in A.D. 10th-11th century thereabouts.

The provenances of the second and the third images (29 cm×30 cm) preserved in the Assam State Musems, are not known. In the first case, the figure is carved along with two other human figures in a projected *khaṭṭaka* (niche) on a slab of stone bearing floral design. Here the figure of the bearded ṛshi is shown standing and keeping both his hands on the chest in jñānamudrā (?). A *jaṭā* on the head of the figure is clearly seen. To the left and right of the figure two female figures of equal height are seen standing. They are keeping one of their legs on a *padma*. The figure to the left is seen in *añjalihasta mudrā*, while the figure to the right is seen holding a *chowrī* (?). Probably the whole sculpture represents a ṛshi and his consorts or his attendants. The sculpture is badly weather-blasted. The other piece of sculpture, representing a ṛshi and his consorts or attendants, is same as the second sculpture. Here also the figures are sculptured in the *sthānaka* posture in the same style.

A figure of Ṛshi is not found outside the Khārghuli nāmghar (sanctuary), Guwahati. Here the bearded figure, shown with long hair falling down, stands in the *samapādasthānaka* attitude and holds something (?) on its chest. Stylistically, it may be assigned to *c*. A.D. 9th century. In the centre of the row of sculptures representing Vishṇu, Śiva and Hari-Hara at Śrīsūrya Pāhār, a figure of a Ṛshi is thinly visible. It is almost worn out.

Buddhist Images

BUDDHA : Although the entire Brahmaputra Valley plus some of the hilly areas of North-East India is full of images of Brāhmaṇical gods and goddesses, yet we cannot deny the existence of Buddhist gods and goddesses in some pockets of this region, which is proved by the sculptural evidences and other symbols. It may be possible that most of the portable images of this pantheon might have been carried to Kāmarūpa from the neighbouring region where Buddhism was the principal religion. But there are rock-cut relics as well, as will be shown later.

K.L. Barua[504] noticed two images of the Buddha in Guwahati. The first one which is in the house of the late Jagabandhu Das of Uzānbāzār, Guwahati is carved in a thin slab of stone (32 cm × 26 cm). The figure of the deity, here, is depicted in the *Yoga-Vākhyāna* attitude, *i.e.* seated cross-legged, with the left hand kept on the lap, while the right hand is made to display the *vākhyānamudrā* and not *abhaya-mudrā* as is held by Barua.[505] The palm of the right hand is marked with the symbol of wheel. The figure has a *ushṇīsha* of good execution having the shape of *kaparda*. The *uttarīya vastra*, on the upper part of the body of the figure, which is loose and is worn in the fashion of a chadar (apron), and the *kaṭivasrta* in the style of a *dhoti* worn as the *paridhāna* of the lower part are well exhibited. Both the *vastras* depict folds. Behind the head of the figure a *prabhā* is arranged. The *urnā* is indicated between the eye-brows. The figure is seated on a *padma*. We can agree with Barua and say that the sculpture, from the stylistic point of view, may be ascribed to some time in A.D. 10th or 11th century. The physiognomy of the image suggests Tibetan affiliation.

This piece of sculpture can well be compared with many paintings of Gautama Buddha from Tibet.[506] Specially, it shows a striking similarity with a painting where Gautama Buddha is shown in "meditation teaching *mudrā*," *i.e.* in *Yoga-vākhyāna* attitude. The sitting posture as we have seen, of both the figures are quite similar. The style of wearing the *uttariyavastra* and the *kaṭimekhalā* as *dhoti* is quite similar. The style of plain *ushṇīsha* and execution of *urṇā* are of common nature. In both the cases the deity is made to sit on a *padma* and a *prabhā* is arranged behind the head. Even in both the cases, the facial expression of the deity is similar.

The second images (Fig. 68) is depicted in a terracotta votive tablet (37 cms. × 10 cm).[507] This miniature figure preserved in the Assam State Museum is punched on a terracotta plaque. Here the deity is shown in *bhumisparśa-mudra*.[508] There are symbols of three *stupas* on both sides of the figure. Below the figure is inscribed the well-known *Mahāyāna* creed in the character of A.D. 11th century.[509] Terracotta plaques with the stamped image of the Buddha, exactly similar to this image, are found at some places outside Assam. As a matter of fact, impressed almost with the same stamp, these plaques have also been discovered in large numbers in Bengal[510] and Bihar. There is another figure of the Buddha in the same museum, stamped on a terracotta plaque like the former one. It does not bear any inscription. But the other features are quite identical.

Therefore, we have found reasons to support Barua who says that these images are of portable nature and might easily have been imported from outside Assam by some Buddhists.[511] Now, it is clear from the comparisons of these images, that the first image of the Buddha for our discussion might have been imported from Tibet,[512] while the second and third figures of the deity were carried either from Bengal or Bihar.

Near the Pañcharatnaghāt on the bank of the Brahmaputra there is a ruined temple. In the site now a modern tinshed temple has been constructed by the local people. Here a few years back a miniature bronze image of the Buddha in *bhumisparśamudrā* (?) was noticed. The style of wearing the upper garment like a *chadar* and the physiognomy of the sculpture suggest its Tibetan affiliation. The image is hollow and the back of the sculpture is slightly damaged probably due to weathering effect. It was brought by the priest from a place near Bangāigāon, as he himself told us. Now both the images and the priest are not to be seen in the temple. S. Kataki[513] noticed, in Pañcharatna hill, two crude images resembling the Buddha in *bhumisparśamudrā*. He further states that he could see some *cakra* which might be a *dharma-cakra*.

Recently, a terracotta plaque has been procured from a village near Srīsūrya-Pāhār for the Assam State Museum. The terracotta piece has an outward bend which may suggest its basement on some round *stupa*. Here we notice eight miniature figures of the Buddha in two tiers. The first tier shows four figures, while the second tier at a lower level depicts four other figures. All the figures are in *bhumisaparśa-mudrā* and stamped in the same way on the plaque. The lower portion of the plane is mutilated. This type of terracotta sculptures carrying the Buddha figures were popular during the Pāla dynasty. The terracotta plaque from Sābhār, illustrated by Bhattasali[514] is quite similar to that of ours. At Urvaśī, the rocky island of Brahmaputra, on the back of the D.C. court, Guwahati, a rock-cut *daśāvatāra* panel is noticed and it has already been described under the *avatāra-murtis* of Vishṇu. Here a seated figure of Buddha is noticed. P.C. Choudhury[515] has identified as the Buddha a rock-cut image on the way to Kāmākhyā. The image is seated in *vajrāsana*. The lower hands are seen resting on the respective knees. The hands of the figure holds some *āyudhas* which are not clear. However, one of the hands appears to have held a *śaṅkha*, like the huge seated Vishṇu image at Śukreśvar. In that case it is difficult to identify the image as the Buddha, and its precise identity is not known.

An image of the Buddha is noticed carved on a stone block in Assam State Museum. The image is badly affected and the details are gone. Here the figure of the Buddha is shown as seated in *vajrāsana* forming *samādhimudrā* with both the hands. It is a small image.[516]

The last (Fig. 17) but the oldest of all the icons, discovered in Assam hails from Daparvaṭīā. This terracotta figurine is a *torso* representing possibly the Buddha. Here the deity is shown seated as cross-legged *i.e.*, in *vajrāsana* and with two hands resting on the respective knees, holding some unrecognisable *āuydhās* (?). The ornaments that are recognisable represent two *valayas*. R. D. Banerji[517] discovered this figurine alongwith some other terracotta plaques, while clearing jungles at the Daparvatiā ruined temple site. He dated it to A.D. 6th century. Now the figurine is under the possession of A.S.I.C. C. Dasgupta[518] has also identified it as Buddhist figure and dated it to A.D. 6th century.

BUDDHIST FEMALE DEITIES: At the Narakāsūr hill (Kāhilipārā) alongwith other bronze images, a bronze image of Tārā (9 cm × 6½ cm) of Khadirāvani variety was found. Now it is in the Assam State Museum. The image is seated in *lalitāsana* pose on a lotus seat. Here right leg is pendant, while the left one is placed on the seat horizontally. The deity has two hands, the right one being held in *varada-mudrā* resting on the right knee, while the left one holds a lotus stalk and exhibits *abhaya-mudrā*. Whether the right hand holds a lotus stalk while displaying *varada-mudrā*, is not clear. But on both sides of the head of the deity two lotuses are beautifully depicted. The stalk of lotus on the left-hand side is clearly seen held by the left hand of the deity. The deity is decorated with *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, etc. She wears a *kaṭivastra* of thin fabric.

This image can be compared with the image of the deity from Khadirāvani, Bengal, illustrated by R.D. Banerji.[519] Like that of ours, this figure is also seated on a *padma* and its head is flanked by two *purna-vikasita* (fully bloomed) *padmas*. The style of the *āsana* posture of the image of Loknātha (A.D. 12th century) from Kurkihar,[520] now in the Patna Museum may also be compared with our image. But the difference is that ours is a female figure, while the image brought for comparison is of a male detiy. The image can also be compared with the images of the goddess in the Deccan Museum.[521]

Another bronze image (17 cm × 4 cm) of Tārā is found in the same group. Here the goddess shown in this icon is in the *dvibhaṅgasthānaka* posture on an *utpala* (lotus). Here the right hand shows *varadamudrā*, while the left one holds a beautiful *utpala* by the stalk. The figure of the divinity is bedecked with the *jaṭāmukuṭa*, *kaṇṭhahāra*, *bāhukīrti* and *valaya*. The *sthānaka* posture and the *utpala* in the hand of the deity make her very like a *Tārā*, although the hood of a single snake is depicted as a canopy behind her head. In fact, the snake-hood is the design of the *prabhā* behind the head of the goddess. This type of images in Brāhmanical pantheon, to our knowledge, is not known to be found any where. The face of the image is badly corroded. The sculpture bears the Pāla style. It may be identified as *Jaṅguli Tārā*.

N.D. Choudhury[522] has noticed an image of Tārā at Budā Mādhab Devālaya near Pratāpgarh Tea Estate, carved on a block of basalt (measuring (32 cm × 16 cm). Here the deity is made to sit on a lotus in *lalitāsana* posture. Her right hand rests on the right knee and is held in *varada-mudrā*, while the left hand holds a lotus bud and at the same time is displaying *abhayamudrā*. Two miniature female figures evidently representing attendants are depicted flanking the deity. Behind the head of the deity a decorated *caitya* (window) is shown as forming a halo. On the upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa*, five miniature figures are depicted. Three of these five figures occupy the places of *Kirttimukha* and *Vidyādharas* while the other two are shown just below them. All these miniature figures are shown as seated on lotus in *yogāsana* posture. Below it are the figures of two devotees.

In the same group of images that are now being preserved in the Assam State

Museum, an eight-armed bronze image (18 cm × 10½ cm) representing a female deity, possibly Cundā is noticed. The *āyudhas* held in the hands of the deity are as follows : The first two hands, *i.e.*, the front hands are held in the *añjalihasta* pose, the second two lower hands with palms upward are placed on the lap, forming *yogāsanamudrā* or *samādhimudrā*, and of the third two lower hands, the right one is in *varadamudrā*, while the left one holds an indistinct object. The uppermost hand on the other side, holds a *puranavikaśita Kamala* (full-bloomed) with a *pustaka* (book) on it. The *jaṭāmukuṭa*, worn by the deity is very clear and her locks are seen falling down her shoulders on either side. No attending figure, not the *vāhana* of the goddess is present. The back of the entire figure of the goddess is covered with a broad and plain *prabhāvalī* which is bordered with some geometrical and floral designs. The top of the *prabhāvalī* is surmounted by a *Chatra* design so common in the *Pāla* art. At the back of the sculpture a seal is impressed, which bears some very small indistinct letters. Seals of this type are found on the back of some metallic icons from Bihar and Bengal. Bhattacharya[523] has tried to identify it as Prajñāparamitā. In the next stage again he has made a confusion by saying that it is a syncretistic image—where Buddhist and Brahmnical influences act and re-act upon each other. His contention seems to be wrong.

In the Assam State Museum a minature bronze sculpture collected from Haharā is preserved. Here two female figures in *padmāsana* attitude are shown. Behind the figures of these deities a tree is shown. The exact identities of these two figures are not known. The female figure holding a child on her lap may be identified with Hāritī. The other figure (without child on its lap) possibly represents Vasudhārā.[524] However, this is a rare piece of icon and we have not come across such a peculiar image. The sculptural trait of the icon recalls the Pāla style. The Assam State Museum houses a different miniature bronze icon where the deity is made to hold a child on her lap. We have preferred to identify the image as Manasā because of the presence of a snake and as such, it has been allready described in the appropriate place of this book. B.N. Mukherjee,[525] however, has identified it as Hārītī to which we do not like to agree.

BODHISATTA : Only three images of Bodhisattna have come to our notice in Assam so far.

The first image which can be identified as Avalokiteśvara is noticed in the group of Narakāsur images,[526] now in the Assam State Museum. In this bronze sculpture the deity is shown seated in the *maharajalīlā* pose on a *siṁhāsana*, holding in his four hands, clockwise : (from upper left) gadā, *nīlotpala* and above it a *śaṅkha*, *padmakosha* and *cakra*. He is attended by a female figure on each side. The figure to the left holds a stalk of lotus (?) of which the flower rise up to the level of the head of the god. The god is decked with *Kirīṭamukuṭa* and other ornaments. Below the *asana* of the deity on either side, a lion is noticed. The figures of the lion are supporting the *simhāsana*. A *prabhāvalī* is also arranged behind the head of the deity. The image is slightly corroded. However, the Pāla art style can very well be detected in this piece of art.

The next bronze image of Avalokiteśvara or Loknāth is also found in the same collection of antiquities. It is sadly mutilated. The left arm of the figure is broken, so also the left foot. The right hand is shown stretching forward, but the *āyudha*, held in the hand is not clear. The god has a *jaṭāmukuṭa* on his head with hair locks resting on the shoulders on each side. This *tribhaṅgasthānaka* image is depicted without any attendant. If there was any attendant figure at all, it must have been missing along with the broken portion of the sculpture. Behind the head of the deity a small betel-leaf-shaped *prabhā* or *śiracakra* is shown. It appears that the image represents some divinity of the Buddhist pantheon and it is likely that it represents *Loknāth*.

The last image from the same group of sculptures is preserved in the Assam State Museum. Like the previous one, the present bronze image is also mulilated. It is a *dvibhaṅgasthānaka* image, possibly, of *Loknāth*. The two-armed deity with, his left hand, holds an *utpala* of which only the stalk can be noticed, the flower is missing. His right hand is made to form a *varadamudrā*, whether this hand holds anything in addition, is not clear. The deity has a *jaṭā* on his head with its locks falling on either shoulder. From the remnants of the *prabhā*, it appears that the shape of the *prabhā* was oval and hollow. It must have been a big one. Resting on the *adhishṭhāna* of the image, it must have reached the height of the standing figure of the deity from its back. The deity wears a long *kaṭivastra*.

P.C. Choudhury[527] has identified a male figure as Bodhisattva in *sthānaka* posture, carved out of a granite block, found in Kāmākhyā. If the stone image which is lying inside the temple compound near the western *toraṇa* is the one of his description, it is difficult to identify it as Bodhisattva. It is a male figure with four hands, out of which the left hands are missing. The *āyudhas* of the right hands are not recognisable. On the head of the figure a conical *mukuṭa* is noticed. The lower portion of the image is not visible. Whether the portion is under earth or broken is not clearly known. The physiognomy and the traits do not have any relation with the Pāla sculptural motif, *i.e.* pre-Āhom sculpture. Therefore, it is difficult to identify it as the image of Bodhisattva.

In the ruins at Piṅgaleśvar a stone slab bearing a figure in the hybrid form, *i.e.* half-crocodide and half-elephant, shows a miniature tree and a seated cross-legged male human figure, looking like a figure of the Buddha in *yogāsana* or *vajrāsana*, with his hands on the lap.

VOTIVE STŪPAS : At Śrī Sūrya Pāhār above the row of rock-cut sculptures representing Śiva, Hari Hara, Vishṇu, *etc*. two rock-cut votive stupas (Fig. 5) have been noticed. After examination at the site in our presence, S.K. Sarasvati liked to place them in A.D. 100 or 100 B.C.[528] A few rock-cut caverns, ascribed to the early period, are also seen at a lower level of the site (Fig. 7). Sarasvati has placed another rock-cut votive *stupa*, (Fig. 6) found a little south of this site, in A.D. 300 or 400 on its stylistic considerations. It is reported by the local people that there are, as the legend goes, about a little less than one lakh of such *liṅgas* which is lying scattered in the hill. They prefer to identify these votive *stupas* as *liṅgas* without *yoṇīpīṭha*. But our close examination reveals that they are nothing but miniature *stupas*.

Similarly, at the slope of the Pañcharatna hill, just near the ruined temple, two rock-cut votive *stupas* are noticed. They are identical with the votive *stupas* found in Śri Sūrya Pāhār, described above. To the east of these *stupas* at a lower level, in the same site, a rock-cut bāse of some small pillar (?) is noticed. Probably it represents the base of some *dhvajāstambha*. Rock-cut caverns are also noticed near Pañchratna ghāt as well as at Jogīghopā on the other bank of the Brahmaputra. The use and antiquity of these caverns are not very clear. According to the local tradition some yogīs used to do penance sitting inside these miniature caves. "Ghopā" means cave, so the place is called yogīghopā. Although there are some steps, it appears, made to climb up the caves, yet one does not find the required space to sit comfortably. It is also not clearly manifest whether the hill and the rocks were dug up on either side of the Brahmaputra in order to facilitate the task of keeping a watch on any possible movement of the enemy across and along the river.

Jaina Images

ṚSHABHANĀTHA : Jainisim was not accepted by the people of Kāmarūpa. Hinduism was the principal religion of this kingdom, as is evident from the archaeological findings. However, like Buddhism, Jainism had also some pockets of influence in those days. This is proved by two rock-cut sculptures at Śri Surya Pāhar, where some images of the Hindu pantheon and a few votive *stupas* have also been noticed.

These two sculptures are noticed on a natural cave, (Fig. 35) caused by two huge rocks, towards a little south of the present temple site. The rock-cut images are of Śiva, Vishṇu, *etc*. The figures are of 135 cm and 93 cm in height. Both the figures stand in the *kāyotsarga* attitude, *i.e.*, standing upright in a posture of meditation with the feet on the ground and arms held downward without touching the body. Below the *pīṭha* of one of the images is noticed a *ṛṣabha*. The other image (Fig. 36) has a *dharmacakra* below its *pīṭha*. S.K. Sarasvati[529] likes to identify the first image as Rshabhanātha, while the second as Neminātha. G.N. Bhuyan[530] says that according to the *Mānasāra*, *Aparājita-pucchā*, *Jaina Murtibicar-Lakshmaṇ* by B. Bhattacharya *etc*., both the images represent Adināth or Ṛshabhanāth. R.S. Gupta[531] also says that Ṛshabhanātha or Ādinātha should have a *ṛshabha-vahana* (an ox as a carrier) or a *dharmacakra* symbol. According to the same author,[532] Neminātha should bear a symbol of *Śaṅkha*. Therefore, it appears that it would not be wrong to say that both the figures represent Ṛshabhanātha or Ādinātha. An image of Gaṇeśa is also noticed on the same rock. The figures are sculptured in low relief. Stylistically, they may be assigned to *c.* A.D. 8th century.

In front of these sculptures, there is a line of inscribed letters. They are not very clear. However, D.C. Sircar and P.D. Choudhury have read them as some names of some devotees or pilgrims and nothing else. On palaeographical ground the inscription may be dated to A.D. 8th-9th century.[533]

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4. *Ibid.*, p. 424.
5. Hazra, R.C., *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas*, Calcutta, 1958, p. 189.
6. *Ibid.*

6a. *Kalikā-purāṇa* (Bengali Translation), Chapters 22 & 80, verses 47, 97-101. Also see Chutia, D., "The *Kālikāpurāṇa on the iconographical representation of Vishṇu*", BASM, No. I, 1975, pp. 18-25.

7. *E.I.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 329-30.
8. *M.A.S.I.*, 1929-30, Pl. XXXVI.
9. *Rūpam*, No. 37, p. 108. Fig. 2.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
11. *E.I.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 329-30.
12. *M.A.S.I.*, No. 2, p. 25.
13. Rao, T.A.E., *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Madras, 1914, Vol. 1, pt. I, pp. 229-30.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 231-32.
15. *M.A.S.I.*, No. 2, p. 25.
16. Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-30.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 231-32.
18. *M.A.S.I.*, No. 2, p. 25.
19. Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-30.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 231-32.
21. Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXVII.

22. *M.A.S.I.*, No, 2, p. 24 ; & Rao, *op. cit.*

23. *M.A.S.I.*, No. 2. p. 25.

24. Rao, *op. cit*., pp. 229-31.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 231-32.

26. *M.A.S.I.*, No. 2, p. 25.

27. Rao, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, pp. 229-31.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

29. Along with this image, there is another image of the deity in the *āsana* posture, which is described along with other images of Vishṇu in the *āsana* attitude.

29a. *M.A.S.I.*, No. 2, p. 25.

30. Rao, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

32. *A.I.*, No. 6, Pl. X, B.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

34. *Ibid.*

34a. *M.A.S.L.*, No 2, p. 25.

35. Rao, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

36a. *J.A.R.S.*, XIX, 1970, pp. 24-26 and XVI, pp. 57-59.

37. *M.A.S.I.*, No. 2, p. 25.

38. Rao, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, p. 229.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 232,

40. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 232.

40a. *M.A.S.I.*, No. 2, p. 25.

40b. Rao, *op. cit.*

41. Banerjee, J.N., *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta, 1956, Pl. XXII, No. 1.

41a. The hillock of the Burhā-Burhī (just near the bazar) must, in the past, have witnessed the settlement of people in that area. The southern slope of the hillock is full of potsherds. These potsherds may not be very old. But at the top of the hillock there are some huge boulders on which some grooves are seen. These grooves might have been caused by the neolithic people. The top of the hillock commands a panoramic view of the Brahmaputra, which flows not far off. However, not a single stone tool is discovered from the site. It may be due to our hurried visit to the site. Below the hillock (near the bazar) an old tank is there and in that tank the image in question was discovered. It is also learnt that some stone steps are still there under the water, the water of the tank. Our contention is that at the site there might have been a temple where the present image was installed. Anyway, further investigation will throw some new light on the antiquity of the site.

42. *M.A.S.I.*, No. 2, p. 25.

43. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, pp. 239-42.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.

45. *M.A.S.I.*, No. 2, p, 25.

46. Rao, T.A,G. *op, cit.*, Vol. 1, Pt. I, pp. 239-42,

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.
48. *ARASI*, 1923-1924. p. 80.
49. Choudhury, P.C. *op, cit.* p. 456, Barua, B.K. *op. cit.*, P.D. Choudhary & M.C. Das, *Ancient Treasurer of Assam etc.*, Gauhati, 1959, p. 34.
50. For details please see " *Dating of two images*" by Choudhury, P.D., *J.A.R.S.*
50a. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923. p. 80.
51. Nath, R.M., *The Back Ground of Assamese Culture*, Shillong, 1948. PL. XIII.
52. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, p. 55.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. *J.A.R.S.*, V. 1 & 2, pp. 26f.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*, VIII, 3 pp. 2f.
59. *Ibid.*, V. 1 & 2, pp. 42f.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid* , pp. 48f.
62. *Ibid.* VII, 3, pp. 88f.
63. *MASI*, No. 2, p. 25.
64. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 299.
65. *Ibid.*, .p. 232.
66. *Ibid.*, pl. XXIV.
67. *M.A.S.I.* No. 2, p. 25.
68. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*- Vol. I, No. I, p. 231.
69. *Ibid* , p. 229.
69a. Choudhury, P.C., *op. cit.*, p. 486. Also *ARASI*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
69b. Barua, B.K. and P.C. Choudhury without giving the place of discovery have mentioned an image of Vishṇu in the *āsana* attitude. Possibly, by this they have meant the seated Vishṇu image on the wall of the Vishṇu temple at Sukresvar. (Barua, B.K., *op. cit.* p. 189 and P.C. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, 488). But, stylistically, the image conforms to the Āhom period.
70. The conception centering round the sculpture is very old, as this group of five principal deities constituted the nucleus of the image worship in India. This is called *pancāyatana*, standing also for five deities under a principal one at the centre. The principal deity here is Vishṇu himself. See D.N. Sukla, *Vāstu Sāstra*, 11, Lucknow, 1960, p. 32,
71. Barua, K.L., *Early History of Kāmarūpa*, 1966, p. 112-113.
72. Nath, R.M., *Glorious Assam*, 1949, pl. VIII.
73. *op. cit.*
74. *op. cit.*
75. *Indian Art*, 1965.
76. *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 1965.
77. *Indian Sculpture*, 1957,

78. J.I.M. Vol. IX, Pl. XXII, No. 46. The image has been wrongly identified as that of the Buddhāvatāra of Vishṇu. In fact, it should be identified as Yogāsana-Vishṇu. Similar image have also been found at Abaneri (near Jaipur), Mathura and Garhura (in U.P.) and one has recently been acquired by the Darbhanga Museum.
79. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Pl. XXIV.
80. *M.A.S.I* , No. 2, p. 25.
81. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*
82. *Ibid.*
83. Barua, B.K., *op, cit.*, P.C. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 488.
84. *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, 3, pp. 90f.
85. *Ibid.*, V. 1 & 2, pp. 44f.
86. *Ibid.*, pp. 39f.
87. *A.R.A.S.I.* 1936-37, p. 57.
88. *Op. cit.*
89. Mankodi, K.M., *op. cit.*, p. 485.
90. Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 190; also Mankodi, K.M., *op. cit.*, p. 492.
91. Sarama, P.R., *op. cit.* p. 297.
92. *Op. cit.* pl. XXIX.
93. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Pt. I, pl. XXV.
94. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. IV, pp. 186f.
95. Mankodi, K.M., *op. cit.*, p. 484.
96. Hazra, *op. cit.*p. 190, and Mankodi, K.M., *op. cit.* p. 492.
97. *Op. cit.*, p. 297.
98. *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, Pt. 1, Pl. XXV.
99. *Ibid.*
100. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.* p. 132. Also Mankodi, K.M., *op. cit.*, p. 480.
101. Rao, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
102. *Ibid.*
103. Agarwala, *Gupta Art*, Pl. IV.
104. *Rūpam*, No. 37, p. 114, Fig. 26.
105. *Ibid.*, pl. XXXVII.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.*, pl. XXXVIII.
108. *Ibid.*, pl. XXXIX, Fig. 2.
109. Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, pl. XXXVI.
110. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 156; also Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.* p. 485.
111. Banerjee, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 417; also Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 156.
112. *Ibid.*
113. *Ibid.*
114. Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

115. *Ibid.*
116. *Ibid.*, also Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.* p. 156.
117. Banerjee, J.N., *op. cit.*, Also, Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*,p. 156.
118. Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
119. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Pt. II, Pls. XLI-XLVII.
120. Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXXVII.
121. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Pl. XLIII.
122. *A.I.*, p. 49, Fig. a.
123. Banerjee, J.N., *op. cit.*,
124. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*,
125. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, Pl. XXIII, No. 1.
126. Chapekar, B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 163.
127. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 486.
128. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.* p. 185.
129. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 185.
130. Banerjee, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 420.
131. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 492; also Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
132. Martin found traces of a temple at Kāldobā near Dhubri, dedicated to Rāma. But nothing has been mentioned about the image (see *Eastern India*, London, Vol. III, p. 473).
133. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1925-26. p. 117.
134. Chapekar, B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 104, 133b, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1925-26, p. 117.
135. Banerjea, J.N., *op*, *cit.*, p. 423.
136. Hazra, *op. cit.*, p, 190.
137. Banerjee, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 424.
138. Mankkodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 482.
139. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 425.
140. *Ibid.*
141. *Ibid.*
142. Also see, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1903, p. 18.
143. Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
144. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 425.
145. *Ibid.*
146. *Ibid.*
147. *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, 1933, Pl. LXX.
148. *Ibid.*
149. Chapekar. B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 144.
150. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 480.
151. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 421.
152. Mankodi, K·L., *op. cit.*, p. 480.
153. *Ibid.*, p. 484.

154. *Ibid.*, p. 491, 1
155, *ARASI.* 1936-37, p. 60.
156. *Op. cit.*
157. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXVII, No. 2.
158. *Ibid.*
159. *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. IV, pp. 186f.
160. *I.H.Q.*, Vol. VI, pp. 364f.
161. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 373.
162. *Ibid.*
163. *Ibid.*, Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 480.
164. *Ibid.*, Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.* p. 492.
165. *Indian Sculpture*, Calcutta, 1933. Pl. 53.
166. Banerjea, J. N., *op. cit.*, p. 375.
167. Panigrāhi, K.C., *op. cit.*, p. 91.
168. *Op. cit* , Vol. I, Pl. CIX.
169. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, Pl. XVIII, Fig. 2.
170. *Ibid.*, p. 377; also Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 493.
171. *Ibid.*
172. *Ibid.*
173. *Ibid.*
174. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, Fig. 3.
175. *Op. cit.*, Pl. LXIII.
176. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.
177. *A.R.S.I.*, 1905, p. 2.
178. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Pt. II, p. 382.
179. *Ibid.*, p. 388.
180. *Ibid.*
181. Chapekar, B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 195.
182. Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p.151.
183. Ibid., N.K. Rao, *op. cit.*
184. Bhattasali, N.K., *op. cit.* p. 151.
185. Ibid., pp. 85-91.
186. Mankodi, K.L. *op. cit.*, p. 488.
187. The origin of this is described by Rao, T.A.G. *op. cit.* p. 308 ff. I
188. Ibid.
189. "*The Vishṇu-purāṇa*, which described, in details, the Chariot of the Sun, mentions Gāyatrī, Bṛhati, Ushnīk, Jagatī, Trishtup, Anushtup and Paṅkti as the seven horses who draw the celestial chariot of the deity; see, Sharma, B.N., "Unpublished Pala and Sena sculptures in the National Museum, New Delhi", *E.W.* New series, Vol.. 19-No. 3—4 September-December, 1969, Rome, pp. 417 ff.
190. Sankalia, H.D., The *Archaeology of Gujarat*, *1941*, p. 160.

191. This miniature figure creates a confusion. Bhattasali has identified it with Usā (dawn) (*op. cit., p. LVUI*). Kramrisch identifies it with Prthivī ("*Pāla and Sena sculpture*" *Rupam* No. 37, Figs. Frontispiece, 7 and 5I). But she has confounded us by identifying this figure in one Surya image with Ushās. See, *Indian Sculpture*, pp 90-91. Pt. 24 and 25, No. 36. The Bengal sculptors, who were followed by the Assamese sculptors, however, hardly fail to represent this miniature figure in front of the figure of Suryadeva and behind the figure of Aruna in an icon of Surya, *i.e.* just in the place assigned to her figure in the *Rg-Veda. cf.* Bhattasali, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 161.

192. This is probably the *nāga*, spoken of in certain texts, which serves to rein the seven horses of Surya (*Nāgarajju*); see Bhattasali, K.L., *op. cit. p.* 169, pL. LVIII. Several images of Surya belonging to the Pāla-Sena periods have this feature. In place of this so called *nāga*, we find sometimes *makara* (crocodile) and rarely *haṁsa*; *see* Kramrisch, *op. cit.*, pp. 90—91, and *Rupam*, No. 37, Figs. Frontispiece, 5 and 51.

193. Kramrisch, *op. cit.* pp. 90-91, p. 14.

194. *Rupam*, No. 37, Fig. 36.

195. Bhattasali, N.K., *op. cit.*. Pl. LVIII.

196. *Ibid.* Fig. 51.

197. Rao, T.A.G. *op. cit.*, Pl. XCIII, Fig. 2. It is definitely a Sena sculpture of Bengal. Later it might have been taken to Ajmere. Rao has not mentioned it.

198. It was discovered and afterwards sent to the aforesaid museum by P.C. Choudhury (*op. cit.*, p. 454).

199. *Ibid.*

200. Also see, *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. X, No. 1 & 2, p. 35.

201. In the *Mārkandeya-purāṇa*, Surya is worshipped as having the three forms of Brahmā, Vishnu and Siva. See B.N. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 416.

202. *Op. cit.*, p. 186, Pl. XXV, Fig. 53.

203. *A.R.A.S.I., 1923-24.*

204. The *kativastra*, worn by the deity, looks like a *mekhalā*, worn by the Assamese ladies, as a lower garment.

205. *A.R.A.S.I., 1923-24*, p. 82.

206. Sankalia, *H.D. op. cit.*, p. 158, Pl. XXXVIII, Fig. 72.

207. Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, Pt. XXVI, Fig. 55.

208. Rao, T.A.G. *op. cit.*, Vol, pt. 2, p. 299.

209. *Ibid.*

210. Choudhury, "*Some Ancient sites in Assam, J.A.R.S.*, Vol. XIV, pp. IIf.

211. Rao, T.A.G. *op. cit.*, p. 309. Also see, *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. II, pt. I, p. II.

212. *Op. cit.*, PL. XXX, No. 1.

213. *A.R.A.S.I., 1924-25*, pp. 80-81.

214. *Background of Assamese Culture, 1948*, Pl. XVII.

215. Rao, T.A.G. *op. cit.*, p. *321*.

216. *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture, 1933*, Pl. XIII, *b*.

217. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XCVI.

218. See for details, Chutia, D., "Some observation on the aniconic symbols etc.,". J.A.R.S., Vol. XVIII, pp 98-106.
219. Banerjea, J.N. *op. cit.*, p. 475.
220. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 273.
221. Rao, T.A.G.. *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pt. I, p. 226.
222. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
223. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
224. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
225. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
226. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XLII and XLIII.
227. *Op. cit.*, Fig. 121.
228. *A.R.A.S.I.*, *1925-26*, p. 116.
229. *A.I.*, No. 6, p. 61.
230. *Rao*, T.A.G. *op. cit.*, p. 379.
231. Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
232. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 379.
233. In the same *āsana* the rock-cut image of Vishṇu from Śukrēśvara, alluded to already, sits.
234. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 379.
235. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XL., Fig. 3.
236. Banerjea, J.N., did not identify these *mudrās* (*op. cit.*, p. 478).
237. The image of Trimūrti at Elephanta is identified by Rao as Maheśa (*op. cit.*, pp. 382-384).
238. Chaudhury, P.D., *J.A.R.S.* Vol. VI, No. 3 & 4, p. 101.
239. Bhandarkar, "*Mathurā Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II, G.E. 61*,", *E.I.* Vol. XXI, p. 7. Also Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 480.
240. Nautiyal, K.P., *op. cit.*, p. 263.
241. *Op. cit.*, *Fig.* 128.
242. Bhattasali, M.K., *op. cit.*, p. 124.
243. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 132, Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
244. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 57.
245. Also see, *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. V, No. 1 & 2, pp. 41f. Here Nath says that the figure with clasped hands is of Nandī.
246. Bhattasali, N.K. *op. cit.*, Pl. XLIX, Fig. A.
247. Choudhury, N D., *Historical Archaeology of Central Assam*, 1985, pp. 212-213.
248. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 101.
249. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 332; Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
250. *Ibid*, p. 334.
251. It records, in short, that the present image was made and donated in the Kingdom of
252. *Op. cit.*, Pl. c.
253. *Op. cit.*, p. 546.
254. *Ibid.*

255. It records, in brief, that the image was donated to somebody in the kingdom of *Mahārājadhirājā Śri Diglekhvarma* by himself ; see, P.C. Choudhury, *Sāptāhik Nilāchal* II, Chaitra, *1891 Saka*.

256. *Op. cit.* Vol. II, PII, pp. 321 & 323.

257. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. VI, pp. 34f.

258. *Op. cit.*, p. 493.

259. Banarjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 553.

260. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 277; Mankodi, K.L. *op. cit.*, p. 58.

261. Rao, *op. cit.*, *p*. 277.

262. *Ibid.*,

263. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XL & LII.

264. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXV, Fig. I.

265. *Op. cit.*, Pl. LIII.

266. *Ibid.* Banerjea has also reproduced such an image, see, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXV, Fig. I.

267. Sankalia, H.D., *op. cit.*, p. 261.

268. Nautiyal, K.P., *op. cit.*, p. 261.

269. Sharma, B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 255.

270. The Deptt. of Archaeology, Assam, has recently cleared the jungle of this area and thus exposed the ruins of a number of temples. Among other things, the ruins have yielded a good number of icons and sculptures datable to 10th—11th century. A monograph on this site will be very much welcomed.

271. *A.R.A.S.I.*, *1923-24*, p. 80f.

272. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 199.

273. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

274. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

275. Bhattasali has spoken of some late texts, such as, the *Sāradātilaka-Tantra* and *Prapanchasāra-tantra*, which contain descriptions of the image of the deity and on the basis of the description, given in the second text, he has identified the image with Aghora. See *op. cit.*, p. 119.

276. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XLVII, a.

277. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XLVII.

278. Choudhury, P.D. has contributed an article on the identification of this image. See *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. VII, pp. 72-76.

279. *Op. cit.*, p 181f.

280. *Op. cit.*, pl. XII. Also see A.R.A.S.I., 1936-37, p 54f.

281. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. VII, pp. 72-76.

282. *Op. cit.* Pls. XXXI & XXXII, Figs. I & II.

283. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXXIII, Fig. 2.

284. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 166.

285. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

286. *Ibid.*, Pls. XXXVII-XL.

287. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

288. *Ibid.*,

289. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

290. *Ibid.*, Pl. XXXIII.

291. *A.I.*, No. 6., p. 60. In the Kumaon region Nautiyal has noticed a *saṁghātamurti* (composite image) of this two aspects. See, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-251. This type of image is noticed in Orissa by Panigrahi, See, *op. cit.*, p. 144. Two interesting images of Bhairava-cum-Gajāntaka, one from Bhuvanesvar and the other from Belurghāt, Bengal, have been illustrated by Sivaramamurti. See, *A.I.*, No. 6, pl. XXIV, Figs. C & D.

292. *A.R.A.S.I.*, *1917-18*, p. 50; 1920-21, pp. 37-38.

293. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol., VIII, No. 4, p. 133.

294. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, p. 36.

295. *Op. cit.*, 1936-37, p. 56.

296. *Ibid.*

297. *Ibid.*

298. Banerjea, J.N. *op. cit.*, p. 357.

299. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 80.

300. *Ibid.*

301. *Ibid.*

302. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 358.

303. *Ibid.*

304. *Ibid.*

305. *Ibid.*

306. *op. cit.*, p. 145.

307. *Ibid.* Pl. LV, Fig. b. and Pl. LVI, Fig. b.

308. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1920-21, p. 39.

309. *Ibid.*

310. Also see, *A.R.A.S.I. 1923-24*, p. 80.

311. *op. cit.* pp. 218-219.

312. *A.I.*, No. 6, pl. IV, D.

313. *Op. cit.*, pl. LVI, A.

314. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. V, No. 1 & 2, p. 39; *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, p. 55.

315. Chapekar, B.N., *op. cit.* p. 135.

316. Banerjea, J.N. *op. cit.*, p. 364.

317. *Ibid.*

318. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*. pp. 415-420.

319. *Ibid.*

320. *op. cit.*, Pl. LVII, Fig. a,

321. The image of the deity belonging to the Gupta period from Banaras is also holding something in front of the *vāhana* in the same way. Sēe Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.* Pl. XVI, Fig. 2.

322. The Kārttikeyamūrti from Bengal, illustrated by Bhattasali, referred to above, can be compared with ours, as both the images sit in the same posture, *i.e.*, *mahārājalīlāsana*, holding the *āyudhas* in the same way. See Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, pl. LVII.
323. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 501.
324. Bhattasali, N.K. *op. cit.*, pp. 198-202.
325. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pt. I, p. 96.
326. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1920-21, P.C., Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 495,
327. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 22.
328. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 534.
329. *Ibid.*
330. *op. cit.*, p. 458.
331. *Op. cit.*, Pl. LV.
332. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
333. *Ibid.* Pl. LV.
334. *J.A.R.S.* Vol. No. 1 & 2, p. 38.
335. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.
336. *A.R.A.S.I.* 1936-37, p. 55.
337. *Ibid.* Here Ramachandran, has said that he saw one figure of Sivadhyānin of which details are not given. On my visit to the site I could locate the image in a broken state. The site has now been disturbed by the visitors.
338. *Ibid*, Pl. XCIV.
339. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.* Vol. II, pt. I, p. 90.
340. *Ibid.*
341. *Ibid.*
342. *Ibid.*
343. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 458.
344. *Ibid.*
345. *Ibid* , p. 460.
346. The *Brahmabhāga*, *i.e.*, the base part of the *liṅga* cannot be seen, as it is stuck inside the yonīpīṭha.
347. The *Mukhaliṅga* from South India, illustrated by Rao, has some similarity with ours. However, in that *liṅga* only two faces are shown and those may not be quite as long as ours. See *op. cit.*, pl. XI.
348. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 497.
349. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 140.
350. Bhattasali, N.K., *op. cit.*, p. 197.
351. Hazra, *Studies in the Upa-purāṇas*, Vol. II, p. 217.
352. The image is now preserved in the residence of Mr. I. Bora, Dhekiājuli.
353. The image is recently painted with some type of colouring.
354. Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 197, No. 4.
355. Sharma, T.C., *op. cit.*, Pl. XX, B & C.

356. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. 11, p. 12; R.M. Nath, *The Background of Assamese Culture*, 1948 Pl. XV.

357. *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 5f, 21f.

358. *Ibid.*

359. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. IV, pp. 93f.

360. *Ibid* p. 93.

361. *I.H.Q.*, Vol. VI, pp. 367-72.

362. *op. cit.*, p. 242.

363. B.K. Barua has illustrated a bronze image of Mahishamardinī, now in the State Museum, Guwahati. See, *op. cit.*, *Fig.* 48. But stylistically it belongs to the Ahom period. A. Mukherji seems to be right in placing it in A.D. 18th century see *Cire Berdue Casting in India*, New Delhi, Pl. 74. Also see *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. XXII, 1974, pp. 32f.

364. *Op. cit.*, p. 198, Pt. LXVI.

365. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 497.

366. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 483.

367. Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 1f.

368. Nath, R.M. Also see, *The Background of Assamese Culture*, 1948, pl. XV.

369. *Ibid.*, pl. XXI.

370. Dikshit, K.N. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81; E.I., XVIII, pp. 329-30.

371. Bhattasali, N.K., *op. cit.*, p. 198. Also see, Banerji, R.D., *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, 1933, pl. LVI, Fig. a.

372. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.

373. If the pose of the hand can be called a *mudrā*, then it should be identified with vismayamudrā in all probability. But the *vismayamudrā* has nothing to do with the deity who is depicted in the *ugra* form.

374. *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Pt. II p. 358 & 369.

375. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, pl. XLIII, No. 4.

376. J.A.R.S., Vol. III, No. I, p. 16.

377. *op. cit.*, p. 243.

378. Bhattasali, N.K., *op. cit.*, p. 209.

379. *Ibid.*

380. Hazra, *op. cit.*, Rao, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Pt. II. App. C., pp. 151-152.

381. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*

382. *Ibid.*

383. *Op. cit.*, Pl. Pl. LXXI, b.

384. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

385. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXVI, B.

386. *Op. cit.*, Pl CXVIII.

387. *Op. cit.*, p. 323, pl. XXVI.

388. For an independent image of the deity, see Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 507, pl. XLIV, No. 5. For panel image see K.C., Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar*, 1967. Fig. 87 A.

389. *Op. cit.*, pp. 207-212,

390. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 406.
391. *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, Pt. 2, p. 358.
392. An image of the deity is also reported from the Sibsagar town at a private residence. Vide information supplied by Sri B.C. Handique, Sibsagar.
393. B.K. Barua has illustrated an image where the deity is seen dancing on a *pretāsana*; see *op. cit.*, Fig. 55. The details of the image are gone. Possibly it represents the dancing Cāmundā. In front of the *dvēra* of the Kāmākhya temple a rock-cut female figure, seated crosslegged on a *pretāsana* facing the south, is also noticed. Two of the hands of the deity display *varada* and *abhaya-mudrās respectively*. The *āyudhas* of the other two hands are not clear. The image is weather-blasted. No doubt it represents some *sakta goddesses*. N.D. Choudhury has noticed an image of Kāli who is seated upon a human figure over a double petalled *padmapīṭha*. This four armed deity is in Pañchanām temple, Lakhimpur town. But he has not said anything about its age. He has also mentioned about a miniature bronze image of Mahākāli form Kalyānithān (Gohpur). Here the deity is made to stand an a prostrate human figure evidently of Śiva) giving the weight on the right long only, while the left one is pendent. But looking at the illustration of this image, we are inclined to place it in Ahom period see, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-245, Fig. 159.
394. Chapekar, B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 109.
395. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 516; Mankodi, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
396. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*
397. *Ibid.*
398. *Ibid.*
399. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. 11. No. 11, p. 244.
400. *Ibid.*, Hazara, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
401. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*
402. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
403. *Ibid.*
404. See 'Discovery of three images', *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. IX, pp. 88-90, Fig. 1.
405. See *Rūpam*, No. 37, Fig. 39 and 40.
406. *op. cit.*, Pls. CXlii—ix.
407. *Op. cit.*, p. 153.
408. *Op.cit.* Pl. LXI, c.
409. P.C. Chaudhury has said that a seated image of Brahmā is in the Assam State Museum, Guwahati; see, *op. cit.*, p. 483. But in fact, such image of the god is not found in the museum.
410. *op. cit.*, pp. 239-40.
411. Chapekar, B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 122.
412. Banerjea J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 513.
413. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 155.
414. *Ibid.*
415. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 516.
416. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Vol, II, pp. 251-52.

417. The image was discovered by S.K. Kakati who having some doubt as regards the indentification of this image of peculiar character wrote to K.N. Dikshit, the then Director General of Archaeological Survey of India, who in reply informed Kakati that his identification was correct. See, *J.A.R.S.*, pp. 89-92.
418. *Ibid.*
419. *Ibid.*
420. Prof. K.D. Bajpai on his visit to the Assam State Museum preferred to identity this image as an icon of Nāgarājā.
421. Gupta, P.L., Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities, 1965, Pls. XXIX and XXXIV, for comparing *ādhāra* (frame), *prabhā* and *chatra* of our image with those of certain other images from Bihar.
422. *op. cit.*, Pl. CL. For details about the collection of images see *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 23-34.
443. Chapekar, B N., *op. cit.*, p. 154.
424. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 480.
425. *Ibid.*
426. *Ibid.*
427. Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
428. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, pp. 263-265.
429. *Ibid.*
430. For the pose, see Sarasvati, S,K., *A Survey of Indian Sculpture*, 1957, p. 128.
431. *Op. cit.*, Pl. 32.
432. Chapekar, B.N., *op. cit.* p. 133.
433. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 118.
434. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Part-I, pp. 8-6; Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*
435. *Ibid.*
436. Mankodi K.L., *op. cit.*
437. If some one likes to identify this image with an archer, it seems that he also will not be wrong. Because, at the absence of the consort of the deity here, the deity looks like a man holding an arrow and a bow. But for holding will be inclined to identify it as the figure of Kāmdeva, *bana* made of *mrināla* one.
438. *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, Pt. I, Pl. LXXXIII, Fig. 2.
439. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, pp. 483 and 490.
440. *Ibid.*, p. 491 and 494; Banerjea, R.N., *op. cit.* p. 354.
441. Chapekar, B.N., *op. cit.* p. 118.
442. *Ibid.*
443. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1925-26, pp. 110f.
444. Sarasvati, S.K., *op. cit.*, p. 143; Munshi and Majumdar (ed.), *The Classical Age*, 1954, p. 523.
445. Munshi and Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 519.
446. *op. cit.*, p. 116.
447. Huyghe, R., *Encyclopedia of Prehistoric and Ancient Art*, London, 1962, p. 326, No. 616.
448. Clark, K., *The Nude*, p. 86, pl. 90.

449. Coomarswamy, A.K., *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, New York, 1965, pl. L.
450. Gupte and Mahajan, *op. cit.*, Pl. I.
451. *Ibid.*, Pl. XXII, Fig. 49.
452. Agarwal, V.S., *Gupta Art.*, 1948, Pl. XVII.
453. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Pl. Cl ClV.
454. Rupam, No. 37, Fig. 29.
455. At Kenduguri beel near Nabhāṅgā, a broken female figure on a block of stone is noticed. The local people call it Gaṅgā. In faet, this is an ordinary female figure.
456. *op. cit.*, p. 250-51.
457. Bhattasali, N.K., *op. cit.*. p. 212; also Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, p. 193.
458. *Ibid.* pp. 216-223.
459. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
460. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
461. *Ibid.*, pp. 226-7.
462. Choudhury, P.D., *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. VIII, No. I, p. 14.
463. Bhattasali has tried to identify the emaciated figure of a *ṛshi* (sage), depicted to the right of the figure of Manasā as Jaratkāru, lit., one who dried up a fine figure (by the austerity of his devotion), and the figure depicted to the left of the deity as Astika, the son of the goddess or as Vāsuki. See *op. cit.*, p. 226.
464. *Op. cit.* pl. LXXIII, a.
465. *Ibid*,
466. *Op. cit.*, Pl. LXIV, b.
467. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. p. 72.
468. *Op. cit.*, Pl. LXXIV, b.
469. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXXIX, Fig. 72.
470. *Op. cit.*, p. 220 f.
471. However, with regard to the confirmed identification of this image, further investigation will be necessary.
472. There are some rock-cut images at Surya-Pāhar. P.D. Choudhury has identified one of them as Manisā. But the image so corroded that its precise identity is almost lost. Sēe P.D., Chaudhury "Some Ancient Sites in Assam," *J.A,R.S.*, Vol. XIV., pp. 110—112.
473. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Pt. II, p. 561.
474. Pancamukhi, R.S., "*Gandharvas and Kinnaras in Indian Iconography*", Proceedings & Transactions of the All India Oriental Conference, 1940, p. 553f.
475. Mankodi, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 482, 484 and 489.
476. *P.T.A.I.O.C.*, 1940, p. 555.
477. *Ibid.*
478. Ibid., Also Banerjea, J.N., 'Vidyādhara', *J.I.S.O.A.*, Vol. IV, pp. 52-56.
479. *Ibid.*, p. 554.
480. *Ibid.*, p. 555.
481. *Ibid* , p. 557.

482. *Ibid.*
483. *Ibid.*
484. *P.T.A.I.O.C.*, 1940, pp. 553f.
485. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
486. *Ibid.*
487. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
488. *Ibid.*, pp. 54f.
489. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
490. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 93.
491. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.
492. Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, Pl. IV, No. 6.
493. The *Śilpa Saṁgrapha* states that in forms the Dvārapālas are like *bhutas* with two big hands in one of which they hold a *gadā*. Usually, in their hands they hold *āyudhas* representing the deity of the temple over which they keep guard. Barua, *op. cit.*, p. 171.
494. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, p. 58.
495. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. VI, pp. 14f.
496. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. V, No. 1 & 2, p. 23.
497. *Ibid.*, p, 27.
498. *J.A.R.S.*, 1970, Vol. XIX, p. 3 If.
499. *East Indian Art Style.*, 1980, pp. 28-29.
500. *Ibid.*
501. *Icons ana sculptures of Early and Mediaeval Assam*, 1978.
502. *J.A.I.H.*,
503. *Abhinandana Bharati*, (Prof K.K. Handique Comm. Volume), 19.
504. *Op. cit.*, p. 99.
505. Choudhury, *J.A.R.S.* Vlo., XI, No. 1 & 2, p. 39.
506. Gordon, *The Iconography of the Tibetan Lamaism*, Pl. 9.
507. Barua, K.L., *op. cit.*, Pl. 10. Also see *J.A,R.S.*, Vol. XI, Pt. 1 & 2, p. 39.
508. This aspect of the deity is called Akshobhya. See Bhattasali, N.K., *op. cit.*, pp. 16f.
509. It reads '*yā Dhamma Hetu Prabhāba*'.
510. It is just like a copy of a terra-cotta plaque having the figure of the Buddha, found at Raghurāmpur, Bengal. See Bhattasali, N.K. *op. cit.*, Pl. IX.
511. Barua, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 100.
512. It might have been carried from Nepal also.
513. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. II, No. 1. p. 10.
514. *Op. cit.*, Pl. X (b).
515. *Op. cit-*, p. 452.
516. Barua, K.L., has mentioned that he noticed a four-faced and eight-handed image of the Buddhist pantheon. But he himself has written, "the image is, however, so corroded now that it is hardly possible to interpret it with confidence," see, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

P.D., Choudhury, has identified this image as Maheśa. See, *J.A.R.*S., Vol. VI, No. 3 & 4. pp. 101-104.

517. *A R.A.S.I.*, 1925-26, p. 110.
518. Dasgupta, C.C., *Origin and Development of Indian Clay Sclupture*, 1944, p. 228.
519. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XVII, Fig. d.
520. Gupta, P.L., (ed); *Catalogue of the Antiquities of the Patna Museum*, Patna, 1965, Pl. XXXI.
521. Bhattasali, N.K., *op. cit.*, Pl. LXIII A.
522. *Op. cit.*, p. 252.
523. Bhattacharya, A., *Icons and* Scl*uptures of Mediaeval Assam*, 1978.
524. *Op. cit.*, p. 452.
525. Prakāsh (An Assamese monthly), 1977. April, pp. 45-47.
526. Mukherjee, B.N., *Eastern Indian Art* S*tyle* Calcutta, 1980, p. 26.
527. *Ibid.*
528. This icon has been wrongly identified and illustrated by Bimal Bandopadhyay as Manasā and also wrongly given the provenance as "Kahlipara" not only in the case of the present icon Vishṇu. The provenance should be "Kāhilīpārā See. Bandopadhya. B., *Metal Sculptures of Eastern India.*, Delhi, 1981, Fig. 62, 63 and 64.
529. *Prakāsh*, (*Assamese monthly*), 1977, April, p. 47.
530. *Assam Sāhitya Sabhā Patrikā* (Assamese quarterly) 1976. June, pp. 38-39.
531. *Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jainas*, 1972, p. 177.
532. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
533. *J.A.R.*S., Vol. XIV, 1960, p. 112.

Chapter 3

Architectural Remains

It is really sad to note that in Assam not a single standing temple, belonging to the pre-Āhom period, has been noticed so far. All the temples and palatial buildings (prāsādas) are in a state of complete ruins. We only see heaps of ruins where once those buildings has stood in the past and where are now seen the sculptural objects and architectural works, undoubtedly in conditions of great disorder. There may be two major possible reasons for their destruction—earthquake, and untoward climatic conditions. It is feared that in the great earthquake of 1896, those monuments fell down.[1] The climatic conditions of this region are different from these in the other States of upper India in that during summer and rainy seasons it rains here heavily causing furiously devastating floods. In other seasons of the year also, rain occurs sometimes. So, this damp climate is a kind of enemy of the standing structural buildings. The growing of vegitation on the structure is also responsible for easy destruction of temples. It is also felt that some monuments suffered at the hands of iconoclasts.

As regards the artistic activities of the kings of Kāmarūpa, we get concrete evidence from the epigraphs of that period. In the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla,[2] it is mentioned that the king repaired the fallen lofty temple dedicated to Śiva. In the Guwahati grant of Ratnapāla, it is stated that "Ratnapāla studded the earth with white-washed temples, enshrining Śambhū."[3] In the Nowgāon grant of Vanamāla,[4] it is recorded that he erected rows of *prāsādas*. Again in the Bargāon inscription[5] of Ratnapāla, it has been spoken of a city, named Durjayā, which had lofty *prāsādas*. The Śilimpur stone inscription[6] refers to the erection of a Śiva temple, so also the

Gāchtal pillar inscription[7] and the Assam plates of Vallabhadeva [8] The Ambāri inscription[9] refers to a religious establishment (*satra*). An Umāchal rock-cut inscription[10] mentions of a cave temple.

Though we have inscriptional reference pertaining to the old architectural objects in Assam, yet we do not see any extant monument of those days, nor we have much idea about the plan and elevation of any temple, as all the old ones have crumbled down and turned into heaps of ruins. As such, we have very little material at our disposal for wrinting the history of the pre-Āhom architecture of the Brahmaputra Valley, and here our effort will be to make a survey and to place them together in a systematic order as far as possible.

REMAINS IN THE KOKRĀJHĀR AND DHUBRI DISTRICTS: At Moronoi, near the Goālparā town, ruins of a temple are noticed. The temple is erected on the top of a hillock which stands on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. As the ruins suggest, there must have been more temples than one. Now nothing on the temple is extant except for a square *garbhagṛha* (366cm × 366cm), oriented to the east. The entrance *dvāra* is narrow and does not consist of any *Śākhā*. The *bhiṭṭi* portion of this *garbhagṛha* is truncated and what remains is only a dwarfish *bhiṭṭi*, measuring about 77cm. The *garbhagṛha* does not house any deity. In all probability, this temple must have been completely a brick-construction, since most of the ruins scattered about the place are only bricks. A few yards south of this temple there are heaps of a few more ruins also of bricks, which once must have been a temple complex.[11]

From the temple site on the hillock, a flight of steps, made of stone slab, goes down to the main stream of the river Brahmaputra, which once flowed just nearby. In all probability the existing ruins do not belong to the pre-Āhom period. But it is not quite clear if the ruins of the other temple near the existing *garbhagṛha* belonged to pre-Āhom period. But the ruins seems to have a bearing. Because at a distance of about half a mile from the ruins, some rock-cut images are found on the slope of Śir Sūrya Pāhār.

About a mile east of Śrī Śūrya Pāhār, at Mornoi proper. broken pieces of *dvāra-śākhās*, *śirapaṭṭis*, stone *phalakas* and bricks are seen lying scattered. These may belong to *c*. 9th century or so. To the east of the Mornoi High School a ruined brick temple is noticed. Nothing worthy of notice remains here except a heap of bricks. It appears from the mounds and ruins that, in the past Mornoi had witnessed a wave or waves of emigration of people[12] and their religious establishments, *i.e.* temples might have reared their heads here. At Choudhury pārā within Mornoi two *dvāra-śākhās*, a *dvāra-śirapaṭṭi* and a *dehalī* are found lying near a modern temple (Figs 50 & 51). The *śirapaṭṭi* bears a seated human figure in the middle. The figure of the divinity is mutilated. On either side of the figure, six crosslegged, seated, miniature figures, possibly representing twelve Adityas are seen each holding lotuses on both hands. To the extreme ends on either side of the *dvāra* at the top of the *śākhās*, figures of Lakshmī and Sarasvatī (?) are noticed. The *dvāraśākhā* bears the figure of a *dvarapāla* at the bottom and above the figures of some incarnations of Vishṇu such as, Kūrma, Matsya, Paraśurāma, Balarāma and Rāma and the figure of Sūrya. Both the *dvāra*-śākhā and *dvāra-śirapaṭṭi* bear some decorative design of creepers. The *dehalī* is simple. Probably, the temple was dedicated to Śurya. These pieces were brought to the place from nearby ruins by the local people. Recently these piece have been removed to the Assam State Museum.

A few shallow *guhās* (caverns), scooped into huge boulders are noticed in the *Yogighopā* hill on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. The *harmyamukham* (facede) of each of the *guhās* shows a *sopāna* (flight of steps) on either side of the *dvāra*. The *dvāra* is a *bṛttakhaṇḍa* (arch). The interior of the *guhās* could hardly accommodate a person; and the chādana (roof) is so low that one cannot stand without bending oneself. The *guhās* are empty, and there are no traces of occupation. Across the river two similar *guhās* are noticed on the Pañcharatna hill. Kataki[13] says on the basis of the information received from the local people that there are traces of pedestals over which some images were originally placed and that original images were thrown into the Brahmaputra by Kālāpāhār, an avowed iconoclast. He thinks that these small *guhās* might have been frequented by the Buddist monks. Actually, it is very difficult to make any precise comment in this regard. We may also conjecture that these carverns might have been used by military spies to see the army movements through the river. For whatever purpose these caverns might have been used, they seem to be considerably old.

At Dekdhoā, some 12 km from the Goālpārā town, there are fragments of carved stone preserved under a tin-shed. These ruins belong to an old temple. Local people say that originally there was an old temple dedicated to Hara-Gaurī but later the Muslim invaders demolished it and built a *Masjid* (mosque) there. By the great earthquake in 1897 the *Masjid* was levelled down and part of the remains were washed away by the water of Jinari, a streamlet. The local people brought some pieces, employed in the original temples, to preserve in their village.[14]

The Dekāidol ruins, Kataki says, consist mainly of some big stone cooking vessels, which look like a *Degchi* upside down. These objects seems to be some old architectural remains of supports to stone pillars of a big structure.[15] Possibly the stone object taken to be a vessel by Kataki might have been the *ghaṭa* or *kalasa* of a temple.

At Dudhanāth and Mahāmāyāthan on the hills on the north of the Brahmaputra, opposite to the Goālpārā town, ruins of a temple are noticed. Inside the ruined temple Śiva-liṅgas have been found.[16] At Pāglātek, a promontary on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, about 15 km from the Goālpārā town on the west, a ruined temple is traced. Ruined architectural members, bricks of old size, stone slabs, *etc.* are lying at the site where now a modern temple has come up. Stone carvings bearing the *Candraśālā* motif are also noticed. This motif on stone carving may be assined to *c*. A.D. 7th century. The Śivalinga belonging to the old temple, has been installed in the modern sanctuary. Just near Pañcharatna ferryghāt at the foot of the hill, there is a ruined temple. The broken *dvāra-śākhās*, *kalasa*, *āmalaka*, *etc*. are lying at the place. Stone carvings bearing *candraśālā* are also seen, as in Pāglātek. The huge Śivaliṅga which might have been installed in the *garbhagṛha* of the temple is still *in situ*. The pecularity of the liṅga lies in that the liṅga portion is quite short, compared to the height and circumference of the Yonīpīṭha. Now in the site a modern tin-shed temple is erected. Just behind that, two huge votive-*stupas* are seen cut out from two solid rocks almost in the style of the Śivaliṅga. A rock-cut *adhisthāna* of a small *dhvajastambha*(?) is also noticed at the site.

On the south bank of the Brahmaputra from Phulbāri towards the west, extensive ruins of brick temples are found from place to place. At Phulbārī now in the Garo hills district of the Meghalaya State but well within the plains in the past some temple must have existed. Such ruins are found at Mahendragañj in the Garo hill district of Meghalaya, on the old Turā Mahendragañj road, at Śivbāri on Turā-Baghmārā road, at Bhāitbarī on Phulbārī Gārobāndha road at Burāburīthān Medārtarī, outside Kharmuzā Fakirgañj E & D embankment and Śingimārī, in-between Pipulabārī and Rājābālā, twelve miles east of Rājābālā, inside the hills. The ruins are of a similar nature, consisting mostly of brick-bats and terracottas, old fortifications and the tanks. These places are well within the Garo hills district except the ruins of Śingimārī and of Mahāmayā Mandir. But as they are in plains, they were connected with Brahmaputra Valley culture in the past. The ruins extending a vast area show that there must have been once some settlement in that area in the pre-Āhom period, which requires further investigation.[17]

At Śrī Surya pāhār, a few rock-cut cavern (miniature shallow cave) are noticed at the site where the rock-cut sculptures in groups are seen. As we have said elsewhere that the votive *stūpas* at the place stylistically may belong to 100 B.C. or A.D. 100. These small caves should also go with the votive *stūpas*, in so far as the age is concerned. As such they are very significant. At Abhayāpurī ruins of a pre-Āhom temple have been noticed. The Directorate of Archaeology, Assam has been doing the work of conservation of the site.

North Bengal which was once included in the Kāmarūpa kingdom have yieded a ruined temple at Baṭeśvar (Fig. 46), Jalpāiguri. The *garbhagṛha* of the temple is still in tact although the upper structure has fallen down. The level of the *garbhagṛha* is lower than the *maṇḍapa* of the temple. A Śivaliṅga is noticed inside it. The ruins belong to Gupta and Pala period.

REMAINS IN THE DARRANG AND ŚONITPUR DISTRICT : At Daparvatīā is noticed a free, most ornate standing *dvāra* (Fig. 12) of a ruined temple, belonging to the late Gupta period.[18] The two *dvarā-śākhās* (161cm × 41cm) have five *paṭṭas* or *śākhās* (vertical bands) each. Above the *śākhās* a *śirapaṭṭi* (125cm × 41cm), which contains a *lalāṭā-bimba* (the image projecting the *śirapaṭṭi* from its middle portion) is horizontally placed. The outermost *paṭṭa* (vertical band on the *dvāra-śākhā*) extends beyond the *śirapaṭṭi* and runs above the same. The first two innermost *paṭṭas* are adorned with *patralatā* scroll design. The second *paṭṭas* has at the bottom a figure of *nāga* in the hybrid form, i.e. the face and the upper part of the body resembles a man and the hoods being the head resemble a *sarpa*. This figure is in the *añjalihasta* pose. The tail of this *nāga* shoots up along and runs horizontally on the *śirapaṭṭi*. The third *paṭṭa* similar in design, runs on the *śirapaṭṭi* horizontally like the first two. The fourth *paṭṭa* is embellished with the tiny human figures and *padmakośas* springing out alternately. This sculptured *śakhā* is surmounted by an ornamental *ghaṭa-pallava* design. The last *paṭṭa* has richly carved *puṣpa* which springs up and spreads across the *śirapaṭṭi*. At the bottom of the (either) *dvāra śākhā* are carved graceful images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā with attendants (Fig 15 & 16).

The topmost horizontal *paṭṭa* on the *śirapaṭṭi* contains *candra-śālā* motifs housing the figures of Lakuliśa, Sūrya, and other mythical figures. The whole *dvāra* is minutely sculptured and both the *śākhās* display most varied decorative details. The extended *śirapaṭṭi*, though not prominent, is a typical Gupta feature. The figure of a flying *gandharva* (*suparṇa*), holding the tails of the *nāgas* on the *śirapaṭṭi* is also a Gupta feature. This figure with two visible wings in a flying posture may also be of Garuḍa.

The present *dvāra* of the temple is standing somewhat unusually. In front of this *dvāra* which is facing the west is put a Śivaliṅga (?) into a hole that exists on a block of stone placed in the middle. Actually, this is not the original *liṅga*, it is a broken piece of some stone pillar (figs. 10 and 11). Local people now worship this as the original Śivaliṅga. But this is a wrong idea. For, the present liṅga, a piece of some broken 'pillar' does not have its yonipīṭha or the size of the pillar does not agree with the size of the hole on the stone into which the so called linga is put. It is highly possible that in this hole the original images of the deity of the temple were placed and that the hole was in the middle of the *garbhagṛha*. In that case the present standing *dvāra* must have been the *dvāra* of the *garbhagṛha* facing the east. Immediately to the west of the present supposed plan of the *garbhagṛha*, we do not notice any trace of *sopāna* for climbing up to the temple. This would lead one to take it as the Original *Garbhagṛha* and not *mukhamaṇḍapa*. Normally looking at the standing temple-*dvara* one likes to comment that the original temple was facing the west. But a close observation reveals that *actually* it should face to the east. In all probability, the entire temple including the *dvāra* got crumbled down in an earthquake and later on when the convention of constructing a Hindu temple, facing the east, was relegated into the back-ground and it became customary to construct it, with its face to the west, the local people managed to keep the *dvāra* standing to face the west.

In fact, no previous scholars made any serious attempt to the original plan of the temple. It is P. Sarma[19] who has made an attempt to study the plan in the right way. Sarma has rightly drawn the plan of this ruined temple. He observes that to the east of the present *dvāra* was situated the *maṇḍapa* to the further east of which was the *ardha-maṇḍapa*. The plan of the *ardha-maṇḍapa* of the temple is generally mistaken as the *garbhagṛha* of the temple. The plan of the temple is, therefore, simple. It consists of *garbhagṛha*, *maṇḍapa* and *ardha-maṇḍapa*. Sarma has rightly observed, that so far as the plan is concerned, the temple in question bears the Gupta architectural features and the simplicity of the plan of this temple which is the characteristic feature of the early Gupta temple has a good deal of similarity with those of the Vishṇu temple at Deoghar, Pārvati temple at Nāchṅākuthāra and Śiva temple at Bhumrā, all of which belong to the Gupta period. The only difference is that the three temples brought for comparison are stone-built, while ours is mainly brick-built. He has further contended that this ruined temple should get the pride of place of being the earliest brick-built Gupta temple and thereby he would like to say that the present temple should be even older than the Bhitorgāon brick temple, so long accepted as the earliest brick-built temple in India. However, this observation of the scholar cannot be accepted, for a comparative study of the position of the images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā on the *dvāras* of the other temples. The style of the sculpture of the two river goddesses depicted on the various temple *dvāras* has led us to place the present temple-*dvāra* in the later half of A.D. 6th century from the chronological point of view. Further, *Kāmarūpa* was far away from the Gupta dominion and the architects of the Gupta period, instead of erecting a newly designed temple, *i.e.* brick temple at Bhitargāon, a place in the Gupta empire, definitely did not come to erect a newly designed temple at Daparvatiā in a frontier State during the days of difficult communications.[20]

To the west of the present site of the Daparvatiā ruined temple, scattered ruins of the pre-Āhom temples are noticed in two/three places. Recently some terracotta sculptures have also come to light. All these show that the area around the Daparvatiā temple witnessed the art activities of the people in a period prior to the Āhom period.

To the north of Daparvatiā, at Bamparvatīā, temple ruins are noticed. At a place of this village, traces of heaps of old bricks indicating the remains of a brick temple is found. Near these ruins, ruins of another temple are found. Still some of the *stambhas* of the temple are seen in a standing condition in front of the Barālimārā satra ; probably, after the original temple fell down, the *staṁbhas* were erected again. It was a stone temple dedicated to Śiva as the existing evidence show. Some old icons kept in a modern sanctuary are still being worshipped.

At Gharporā Cuburī of Mājgāon village, Tezpur, ruins of temples are noticed. The ruins are lying scattered covering about two acres of land. Till recently these were under the cover of thick vegetation. Now the site has been cleared. It is evident that some fifty or hundered years back, local people dug here and removed some architectural or sculptural piece from here. There seems to be ruins of two temples. Two huge *dvaraśirapaṭṭis* are worthy of notice. They are lying separately near relics of their *garbhagṛhas.* Both the *śirapaṭṭis* (each measuring 230cm × 77cm), depict the same scene—a few miniature *śikharas* and in the middle of each of the *śikhara* a figure of Ganeśa. Likewise two *śilālī* (each measuring 230cm × 77cm.) are also at the site. They are not decorated in the usual way with the motif of a *ghaṭa* and two retreating lions on either side. Both these pieces are decorated in the middle with some floral (*kalpabṛksha*) patterns and some broad carved lines on either side. A similar broken piece is noticed lying on the road side near the residence of Sri S.P. Barua, Uzanbazar, Guwahati. Two broken *āmalakas* are also noticed in the Mājgāon ruins. There are also other stone slabs lying on the surface in disorder.

At a distance of about 100 meters from the ruins a *dvāraśākhā* is lying separately. It was definitely brought from the actual site of the temple. Another two *dvāra śākhā* have been preserved in a sanctuary of the late Prabodh Chandra Barua of the same village, to the east of the actual temple site. All the three *śākhās* are of the same style. Each *dvāra-śākhās* consists of three *paṭṭas* or *śākhā.* The innermost *paṭṭa* is decorated with a band of *patralatā* pattern, the second in an interlacing sarpa *paṭṭa* and the third has *puṣpa* (floral) design (?) interspaced with a small *āmalaka.* At the bottom of the two of the *śākhās*, one preserved in the said sanctuary and the other lying near the ruined temple sites, figures of Gaṅgā, *dvārapāla* and Nandī in the anthropomorphic form, are depicted. The other *śākhās* bear the figures of Yamunā, dvārapāla and Nandī in the same way. The two *śākhās* along with some other chiselled stone slabs of the temples were brought to the residence of late Barua, by his father. The remaining one *śākhā* of a *dvāra* of one of the two temples may be lying buried under the earth. Unfortunately, not a single image is noticed in this site. However, looking at the *dvāra śākhās* and the *śirapaṭṭis* one may rightly think that the temples were dedicated to Śiva. Stylistically, the ruins should date to *c.* A.D. 9th century.

In the town area of Tezpur scattered pieces of sculptures, stone slabs and other fragment of old architectural objects are seen. In fact, the place was possibly chosen by the kings of Sālastaṁbha line as their capital and so, temples and other buildings were constructed in this locality. Now, those temples and other construction if any, are in peril. Only the remnants of monuments can be seen in great disorder. F.J. Monahan[21] saw many hewn blocks of granite forming a layer, when builders dug for the construction of the Deputy Commissioner's court in 1906. Some of the blocks which had been dug up, as deseribed by him were "elaborately sculptured, as cornices, base or capitals of columns, *etc.* These remains point to the existence of a great building, of massive and ornate architecture at Tezpur. Bloch[22] has rightly conjectured that modern civilization at Tezpur stood upon large mounds which contained the remains of old relics. The majority of the sculptured stones were removed to the compounds of the European officers and the Tea-Planteres' club where now a church and the Donbosco school have come up. Some of them subsequently were removed to Cole Park.[23] A few years back some more pieces were removed to this park. On examination of these remains, it has been found that they belong to three different periods of history and, "therefore, must have belonged at least to three separate buildings."[24]

Among the notable objects of the first group are two *staṁbha* and a huge *śirapaṭṭi* (189cm × 5cm). The first *staṁbha* is sixteen-sided, its upper part being ornamented with a broad *paṭṭa* having Kīrttimukha at the top and the lower one with dentils. In the second *staṁbha* the upper part of the gṛva (shaft) is (decagonal) and near the top it is divided into three raised horizontal *paṭṭas*, two of which contain Kīrttimukhas and the third a series of (diamond-shaped) *phullavalīs*. The style of both the *staṁbha* appears to belong to the same period and most probably to the same temple of *prāsāda*.[25] The *śirapaṭṭi* is divided into two different parts. The upper part shows five miniature *śikhara* with a *liṅga*. In the lower part is noticed a continuation of the design on the *śākhās*, *viz*, two *paṭṭas* of meandering *latā* creepers and two others consisting of *phullabalī*. In the centre of the lower part of the *śirapaṭṭi* there is a small *khaṭṭaka*, housing a miniature figure of Gaṇeśa. It appears from the nature of the carvings that all these architectural specimens belong to late A.D. 10th century.[26]

In the next group of ruins, found while digging for Deputy Commissioner's buildings, we find an object which is worth mentioning.[27] It is a huge *śirapaṭṭi* (118cm × 51cm) of a temple *dvāra*. It shows that the *dvāra* of the temple was quite wide. There are three raised panels on this *śirapaṭṭi*, one in the centre and on each side and each of them is divided into a large *khaṭṭaka* in the centre with a smaller one on either side. The panel on the left contains a *sthānaka* figure of Brahmā in the central *khaṭṭaka* with an attendant on either side. The central panel is occupied by *sthānaka* figure of Sūrya with two attendants, while the panel on the extreme right contains the *sthānaka* figure of Śiva with two attendants in the same way. The space between the raised panels is divided into six *khaṭṭakas*, three to the left and three to the right of the central panel. They contain six figures, which represent some grahas (planets). All these *khaṭṭakas* are separated from each other by a round *laghustaṁbha*. Other fragments of a big size of this group are also seen having human figures, designs, *etc*. The nature of the remains show that the huge temple was dedicated to Sūrya and the ruins might belong to about A.D. 12th century. A *silālī* of the same temple depicting the vase and the retreating lion motif is also seen lying at the same place, *i.e.* Cole Park. The vase and the retreating lion motif is commonly met with in the *silālīs* of the pre-Āhom ruined temples of Assam.

But the *dvāra-śākhās* of this huge temple have not been discovered so far. The large *dvāraśākhā*, depicting the *dasāvatāra* of Vishṇu, seems to belong to a much later period, as Banerji thinks.[28] It is, therefore, not possible to deduce the height of the *dvāra* with accuracy. However, it seems, it is clear from the *śirapaṭṭi* and *śilāli* that the height of the *dvāra* could not have been less than 438cm.[29] Banerji further conjectures that if the height of the *dvāra* of the main entrance to the *garbhagṛha* was 438cm, then the height of the *jaṅghā* must have been from 652cm to 815cm. In that case, the total height of the temple up to *śikhara* was considerably over 3260cm.[30] However, we do not think that the huge *dvāraśakhās* depicting dasāvatāra *murti* on stylistic ground belongs to about the same period to which other architectural pieces belong. The majority of the carved stones in the Cole Park at Tezpur were taken from the ruined temple at the site on which the building of the Deputy Commissioner's office is built, as said above (Fig. 48).

K.L. Barua,[31] has rightly said that Banerji's conjecture that the ruins in the Tezpur town represent only temple is doubtful. Barua's conjecture seems to have the same value when he says that the stone building dug up in the Deputy Commissioner's court compound, may be the palace of Vanamāla, which was erected in A.D. 9th century. Barua further rightly comments that we can not agree with Banerji, who says that the building, mentioned by him, belongs to A.D. 12th century, for towards the end of that A.D., the capital Hāruppeśvara was, in all probability, abandoned by Brahmapāla.[32] The temples, according to him, belong to A.D. 9th century and the lofty ruined temple might have been the Himalaya-like temple of *Hātaka śulīn*, which is said to have been reconstructed by Vanamāla.

Our conjecture is that the ruins do not seem to belong to three different periods of history, as asserted by Banerji, on stylistic ground. It is possible that all the architectural pieces referred to above belong to 9th-10th century. It appears from the stylistic evidence that the second group of ruins, including the huge *śirapaṭṭi* does not belong to the 12th century and the large *dvāraśākhā* in the Cole Park does not date to a much later period, as said by Banerji.[33] Therefore, we find reason to attribute these ruins to the kings of Śālastaṁbha line.

The huge ruined temple, in all probability, was dedicated to Sūrya, as said by Banerji.[34] For, the *śirapaṭṭi* of the ruined temple bears the figure of Sūrya in the middle. Also it bears some Navagraha mūrtis. There must have been more than one temples at Tezpur itself at that time. It is also sure that more ruins are still under the earth level of the town. Therefore, the temple like *Hātaka Śulīn* dedicated to Śiva may be lying under the earth somewhere in the area. However, its identification will be a different job. The present *śirapaṭṭi* did not, it seems, belong to the temple like *Hātaka Śulin*, as said by Barua.[35] But Barua rightly infers that in addition to temples there might have been a royal palace in the present Deputy Commissioner's court area[36] as stated above. Even now a huge square size chiselled stone at the back of the old building can be seen.

At Bāmuni Pāhār (hill), a hillock on the left bank of the Brāhmaputra, about a mile or so to the east of the Tezpur town, extensive ruins of pre-Āhom temples are seen. R.D. Banerji[37] visited the site as early as 1924. According to him the ruins belong to a group of seven shrines and six of these shrines were situated in a large rectangular *prākāra* (walled compound), *viz.*, one each in the four corners and two large ones in the centre, while the seventh stood in the east. The pavements inside the *garbhagṛhas* of both the larger shrines in the middle of the *prākāra* are still intact.[38] One of these central shrines was originally smaller in size than the other. The larger temple faced the north and an *antarāla* with a circular *dvāra-sopāna* (door step) intervened between its *garbhagṛha* and the *maṇḍapa*, which must have been quite big in sige.[39] He noticed also a *gṛva* of a *staṁbha* in the debris, measuring 346cm in length and 51cm in diameter. A cross-shaped *potikā* (bracket) measuring 135cm × 142cm, and a huge *śirapaṭṭi* decorated with horned Vīrttimukha, were also seen. Another *śirapaṭṭi* (387cm × 92cm × 74cm) was also on the site. The *dvāraśākhās* (173cm × 72cm) of the larger temple are still seen lying on the top of the ruins. Each of them is decorated with a raised *paṭṭa* on each side with a row of miniature *śikhara* superimposed in the centre. The *paṭṭa* on the left *dvāraśākhā* bears a *patra-latā* design and on the right a row of *phullavalī*, designed alternately square and round. There are miniature *śikharas* in each horizontal row in the centre.[40] There is a big panel, bordered by two round *laghustaṁbhas* with a trefoil arch on the centre and an "exactly similar panel or recessed corner on each side.[41] The smaller panels contain some male or female attendant figurines. The central panel bears some figures of the *avatāras* of Vishṇu. Many of the square *potikās* bear, on their faces, oblong panels with base reliefs. Now, many of the objects, mentioned above, are not to be seen in the ruins. The debris are in great disorder, having become hotbeds for snake.

At Agnigarh on the Brahmaputra, Tezpur, also some ruins existed. Now a water reservoir has been constructed at the top of the hillock, the site of objects of antique value. On the other hillock, nearby, where the residence of the Deputy Commissioner stands, some sculptured stone slabs are lying. On the right slope of it facing the Brahmaputra, a stone *staṁbha* is also noticed. Just infront of the Deputy Commissioner's residence there are a few architectural pieces, including a *dvāraśākhā* showing figures of dvārapālikā, *etc.* A round stone, divided into two equal haves, shows on each side a figure of Kirttimukha, carved in relief with beaded lines. This must have been some architectural piece. The stray pieces of chiselled stones lying to the left side near the wooden fencing were reported to have been brought from Śingri some 50 years back.

In many places pre-Āhom ruins are noticed. At Tiṅgeśwar, on a hillock to the west of Tezpur on the bank of the river, ruins of an old temple have been lying. The Śivaliṅga is still worshipped by the people. At Haleśwar, about 5 km to the north of Tezpur also exist heaps of ruins of an old temple. Now a modern sanctuary is erected there for daily worship. At Barpukhurīpār an image of Brahmā and another, that of Gaṇeśa are noticed. It is not clear whether they were brought from the ruins of the temple at Haleśvar or they were the deities of some temples at

Barpukhurīpār. But at Barphkhurīpār there is no trace of any temple. The ruined temple at Haleśvar and Tiṅgeśvar must have been dedicated to Śiva.

A little away from the Harjjārpukhurī, Tezpur, towards the south are seen the remains of a small stone temple. One *viśvapadma*, the ceilling stone of the temple is seen lying at the site. Broken pieces of *staṁbhas* are also noticed. Other slabs of stone, used in the *adhisthāna* and bricks used in the *bhiṭṭi*, are lying uncared for.[42] Temple ruins are noticed at Marāseleṅgi near Helem. The *prākāra*, made of bricks, of the ruined temple at the place is traceable in the form of a rectangle. At Gohpur a huge broken image of Sūrya is noticed. Now the image has been joined to-gether in the proper way. From the topographical point of view it can be ascertained that there existed a temple where the image might have been installed. The place where the temple existed is in a raised level. The trace of a ring well is also found there. At Śilbori, about 15 km away from Dalgāon, on the bank of the Dhansiri river, a stone-built temple in ruins is noticed. The *dvāra-śākhās*, *śilālīs* and *śirapaṭṭis* are lying at the site. A few pieces have also been brought to the Dalgāon police station. A broken *dvāra-śākhā* at Dalgāon shows a dvārapāla, holding a *dhanu* and a *bāṇa* and above the figure a *chaitya* is shown over which two *paṭṭas*, one of *patralatā* and the other of animal, intercepted by *patralatā* designs—are carved nicely. Temple ruins are also seen at Bāman, about ten miles to the south of Dumunicakī on the way to Kuruā on the bank of the Brahmaputra. A *Viśvapadma*, a *pranāla* and the decorated stone pieces of *adhishthāna* of the temple are worth mentioning. A slight clearance will expose the plan of the temple. It appears that it was a stone-built temple of the pre-Āhom period. Near Mangaldoi in the Mājulī tea estate temple ruins are also seen. On the bank of the Brahmaputra, at Viśvanāth, traces of old temples are seen. Many wrought stone pieces are now found in the bed of the river. They become well-exposed during the winter seasons. At Gomirī and Bihalī similar ruins are reported to have been noticed.

The extensive ruins of temple at Śiṅgri, locally known as the ruins of the Viśvakarmā temple, according to S. Kataki,[43] belonged to a Durgā temple. But R.M. Nath[44] pleads that it may be a ruined Śiva temple. Kataki further says that previously in that heap of ruins an image of Durgā was found. On this basis, it seems, his argument is convincing. But looking at the ruins it is not easy to make any consclusive remark. It appears that the ruins are scatteard in an extensive area under thick jungles, which is frequented by wild elephants. There must have been a group of temples and a few of them were quite big ones, as the existing *dvāraśākhās*, *śirapaṭṭis* and other broken architectural stone pieces show. The plinth of the *garbhagṛha* of the main temple (?) and on it the huge leaning *viśvapadma* (ceiling slab) can be noticed. One or two *dvāraśirapaṭṭis* show images of Sūrya and some other *Navagrahas*, as in the *śirapaṭṭi*, preserved in Cole Park. The carvings of these figures and the size of the *śirapaṭṭis* are strikingly similar to those at Cole Park. Hence, it is possible that one or two temples must have been dedicated to Sūrya. These stone-built ruimed temples which were broken during earthquake, bear close affinity with the remains at Tezpur, in so far as their age is concerned. It needs extensive conservation work, which will unveil many new things at the site.

To a little west of this site, which is inside the present Śingri tea estate, on the Dhekiajuli—Śingri P.W D. road, another ruined temple is noticed. The images of this stone-built temple are lying on the roadside and in the houses of the villagers in the same locality. Unless the heaps of chiselled stones are systematically cleared off, it is difficult to throw any light on its plan.

To the śouth of this site on the bank of the Brahmaputra stands the Gupteśvar temple, which was renovated almost in the pre-Āhom style at a later period. Originally, there must have been a temple at the sites, as the sculptural and architectural pieces that lie scattered about the places show. It appears that the *stambhas* and *potikās* of the *maṇḍapa* of the present standing temple were the original pieces of the old temple once existing in the site. There are certain features in the *jaṅghā* and the *śikhara* of the present temple which do not offer similarity with those of the existing Āhom and Koch temples, found in other places of Assam. Therefore, it is likely that after the original temple at the site had fallen at a later period, *i.e.* the Āhom period, with some of the old architectural pieces imitating the original pre-Āhom style, the architect might have built the present temple, which is dedicated to Śiva. As there is no inscriptional evidence with regard to its construction, it has become difficult to throw light on the date of its renovation. However, the sculptural style of the *dvāraśākhā* shows that the temple must have been rebuilt in the Āhom period. The *adhishthāna* of the present temple has gone a little down because of earthquakes or it is also possible that rains have washed away the earth from the upper portion of the nearby hillock. Thus, the earth possibly accumulated around it. The garbhagṛha of the temple remains always under water and it is said that a Śivaliṅga is also under the water.

To the further east of the present factory of the Śingri tea estate across a stream, a few more ruined temples are reported. From the existing evidences, it can be safely concluded that in the pre-Āhom period Śingri was a great centre of temples. To the east of this site some more temple ruins have been reported.

At Sirājulī near Dhekiājuli another ruined temple is noticed. Some of the architectural pieces, such as *dvāraśākhā*, broken *āmalaka*, etc. have been preserved in the Vaishṇava sanctuary (*satra*) at the place. The huge *śirapaṭṭi*, noticed at the place, carries in the same way miniature *śikhara* designs, as those at Tezpur. The *dvāraśākhās* preserved at the place are not much decorated.

REMAINS IN THE KĀMARŪPA AND BARPETĀ DISTRICTS : Ruins of temples, belonging to the mediaeval period, are found in many places of these districts. The ruins mainly occur in the Guwahati sub-division only. On the north bank of the Brahmaputra, at Hājo, at Madankāmdev parvat, North Guwahati, at

Tāmulpur (in Nalbari sub-division), *etc.*, ruins of old temples are noticed. At Hājo, about 25 km north-west of Guwahati, now stands the temple of Hayagṛva Madhava. Originally there must have been an old temple, as is evident from the stray sculptures. The present temple built in A.D. 16th century under the patronage of Raghudev, a Koch king, must have been constructed over the site of the old ruined temple. The *dvāra* of the *garbhagṛha* of the present temple seems to have belonged to the old temple. The *Gajathara* mouldings around the *adhishthāna* of the *vimāna* of the temple have been definitely employed from the ruins of the old temple. The Kedārnātha temple and the Durgā temple at the place stand at a distance of about 2 km east of the Mādhava temple. These two temples were built in the Āhom period. But the broken wrought stone pieces, lying at the site, show that once there existed a pre-Āhom temple.

At Madankāmdev parvat,[15] near Bāihātā Chāriāli, exist, extensive temple ruins. The nature of the ruins leads us as to infer the class of the temple. There must have been a big Śiva temple installing the huge image of Umā-Maheśvara which is still being worshipped by the local people. Various sizes of stones decorated, dressed and sculptured, are lying at the site in a great disorder (Fig. 69). From the sizes of architectural pieces, it can be guessed that the temple was quite high and stone built which might have collapsed in an earthquake and afterwards no renovation was done.

At North Guwahati ruins of the pre-Āhom period have been noticed in many places. Although the present temple at Aśvaklānta was built in the Āhom period, the existing stray architectural and sculptural pieces show that in the pre-Āhom period there must have been some temples in the locality. To the west of the temple on the bank of the Brahmaputra chiselled stones are noticed. A stone *potikā* from this place has been removed to the Assam State Museum. The steps, leading to the temple, consist of the stone pieces, used in the Pre-Āhom period. At Deulgovinda at present exists a modern temple. Here pre-Āhom temple ruins are seen lying near the P.W.D. road. Architectural members like *śira-stambha*, *āmolaka*, *potikā*, *etc.* are seen in a state of great disorder along with some images. As the nature of the ruins shows, there must have existed a Śiva temple in *c.* A.D. 8th/9th century. About one km west of the place on the P.W.D. road itself, old stone blocks of various sizes—some bearing decorative designs and some chiselled marks—have been recently found, while digging trenches for water pipe lines. An image of Kārtikeya has also been recovered from the ruins. This shows that there was a *Śaiva* temple at the site and it was, probably, contemporaneous with the ruind temple at Deulgovinda. Near Deulgovinda on the hill, rocks were partially blown off and must have been carried for chisellisation of sculptures and architectural members. Just on the bank of the Brahmaputra at Manikarṇeśvar, on the top of a hillock, there is a modern temple. But the site yields the ruins of a pre-Āhom temple, consisting of broken *dvāraśākhās*, *āmalakas*, *etc.* Evidently there must have been a temple in the pre-Āhom age. Old chiselled stone blocks can be seen at the residences of the local people in the locality.

To the north of Manıkarṇeśvar temple, at a distance of about three km, there is a temple on the hill, built in the days of the Āhoms. The name of the temple is Dırgheśvawrı. The site has a few fragments of architectural pieces of an old temple. A few rock-cut miniature pre-Ahom Śikhara designs are noticed here. To the south-west of Hājo, on the bank of the Brahmaputra, just opposite to old Palāśbari, across the river at Śoālkuchi, there is the temple of Siddheśvarī. Here two big images of Sūrya are placed outside the shrine. On the other shrine an image of Mahishamardinī is installed which has been regularly worshipped by the local people. It seems that there was an old temple at the site in about the 10th century or so and the Sūrya images must have been installed there on the considerations of the style, obtaining in A.D. 10th century. At Tamulpur, to the north bank of the Brahmaputra in this district, is the ruined *śilśāko* or the stone bridge. The bridge was over the channel of the river Barnadi, which empties itself in the Brahmputra and through this bridge Mahammad Bukhtiyār and his Turkish cavalry passed in 1206 A.D. and afterwards met their Waterloo. The bridge was destroyed by the great earthquake of 1897. Now the ruins are under the cover of a thick jungle. An elaborate, description of the bridge is given by Hannay, who saw it in 1851. As at that time there was no well-developed photographic instrument, he drew the full picture of the bridge and published it.[46] From the picture, in appears that there were as many as eighteen pillars and that these carried on their heads the flat and heavy stone slabs, making the way over them. From his description it can be supposed that the bridge was constructed without line and mortar. Lime and mortar were not used, probably because Assam experienced as heavy rainfall in the past as in these days, and this helped the luxuriant vegetation to grow up in the mortared joints of bricks or stones of any construction and ultimately the vegetations attacked the relics in such a way that within years these crumbled down. Hannay says that the designed slabs of stone might have been used at the entrance of each structure and that of the bridge.[47] Further, he thinks that "the design and style of architecture of this bridge evidently belongs to a remote period in the annals of Kāmarūpa and, in its original structure at least must be co-eval with the erection of the ancient Brahmanical temples the remains of which are found so widely scattered throughout the length and breadth of Assam."[48] P.C. Choudhury[49] says that this *śilśāko*, was over the Brahmaputra, linking North-Guwahati and Guwahati. It is nothing but a hypothetical remark. Neither we can think of the construction of a stone bridge in that time, over the mighty river, nor we have any evidence to show that there existed a bridge linking North-Guwahati and Guwahati over the mighty Brahmaputra in the past.

At Piṅgaleśvar, to the North of Bezerā near Bāihātā Chāriālı, ruins of a temple are noticed while digging for the construction of the *garbhagṛha* of a modern temple at the place quite a good number of stone blocks of stone including broken temple architectural pieces and sculptural representations were discovered. All these carved stone pieces have been preserved by the Archaeology Department, Assam under a shed at the place on the left bank of the big tank. The present temple at the place belongs to the Āhom period. But the ruins discovered at the place certainly belong to a temple constructed in the pre-Āhom period, which may date to *c.* 9th/10th century (Fig. 39). A small old stone bridge is noticed to the western part of north Guwahati. It is called another *śilśako*.

At Chaigāon on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, ruins of a temple are noticed. According to a popular legend, the existing ruins are the remains of the *Merghar* (round sanctuary), erected by one Chānd Saudagar, a legendary merchant. Now traces of two round and sunken *garbhagṛha* can be seen. They are stone-made. At present, at the site a modern sanctuary has come up and the local people there worship an image of some Tantrik Buddhist goddess and an image of Sūrya. Supringly, in the ruins *dvāraśākhā*, *śirapaṭṭi*, *āmolaka*, *ghaṭa* and other architectural pieces, commonly found in other ruins, are not found. To a little west of the site is seen various broken architectural pieces of some temple of a later period which are now preserved by the State government at the place.

At Pāndughāt, on the bank of the Brahmaputra, there is a modern sanctuary. Here traces of some old temple have been noticed. Some old chiselled stones were used in the construction of the present sanctuary, which is badly affected by erosion of the river. Just on the back of the temple there are five rock-cut images four of which represent Gaṇeśa, while the fifth represents a female figure. Local people call them as Pañcha Pāndavas. So, the temple is named after them and it is said that the name of the locality, Pāndu, was derived from the name of the temple.

From Pāṇḍu there is a way to Kāmākhyā temple on the Nīlāchal hill. Near the western *toraṇa*, on the way, there are some miniature rock-cut *śikhara* designs (Figs. 53 & 54). A Śivaliṅga is enshrined in each of the *śikharas*, which seems to be of Orissan type.[50] Climbing up the hill we find a shrine, named Ghaṇṭākarṇa. At the *adhishṭhāna*, some of the stone blocks of which bear sculptures belonging to some pre-Āhom temple, are noticed. Sculptured stone pieces of an old temple are found lying here and there at Kāmākhyā. The Kāmākhyā temple, which at present is visited by people even from far-off places, was built by the Koch king Naranārāyana and used to be regarded as a seat of Saktism and tantricism from the earlier period and it is evident from the sculptures and architectural pieces that there was some temple here in the pre-Āhom period. At the taxi stand of Kāmākhyā a broken *dvaraśirapaṭṭi* of som pre-Āhom temple is seen. A broken decorated *stambha* is also noticed, lying in a drain on the left side away from the front *toraṇa* of the temple. Near the eastern *toraṇa* inside the *prākāra* of the main temple there is a shrine of which the *śilālī* of the *dvāra* shows two retreating lions and in between them a vase. This *śilālī* definitely belongs to a temple of earlier period. From the remains of the earlier temple and stray sculptures, it can be inferred that in a period ranging from 6th to 11th century there were some pre-Koch temples at Kāmākhyā.

Urvaśī is a small rocky island in the Brahmaputra near the court of the Deputy Commissioner, in Guwahati. Here some rock-cut sculptures are seen. A few lines of letters are also traced here, inscribed on a rock. But they are almost washed away, as during the rainy and summer seasons the island has to face the strong current of the river. There are also traces of some carved alignments, rock-cut *sopānas*, small holes, meant probably for iron clamps and wooden posts or nails. From the alignment of the plan of the temple that is supposed to have existed here once, it is clear that the small shrine on the rock had its *garbhagṛha* and a small *maṇḍapa*. In the *garbhagṛha* traces of two miniature Śivaliṅgas and a *padma* (?) are noticed. To the west of this site in the same island on another rock, traces of two footprints and a *padma* (?) evidently *Vishṇupadas*, are noticed. Chiselled stone blocks are also noticed in this place.

At Uzan Bazar, Guwahati, near the old waterworks, just on the bank of the Brahmaputra, there are a few rock-cut images. Now they are in very bad shape. Near these images at a low level some broken architectural pieces of a temple are noticed. The *āmalaka* of the ruined temple was, till recently, clearly visible in the winter season. Probably this temple belonged to about official A.D. 9th century or so, as the existing evidence shows and the temple might have been constructed over the present site of the bungalow of a railway official.

Stray ruins of temples are scattered throughout Uzan Bazar, Jorpukhurī, Judges' Field, Āmbārı, Chalābil, Deputy Commissioner's residence and Sukreśvar and many, other places of Guwahati. From the ruins it can be inferred that at Uzan Bazar near the river bank up to the bank of Jorpukhurī there were few temples. In the road-crossing near the residence of Shri S.P. Barua, broken *āmalaka*, *dehalī* and many other broken architectural pieces are seen. Evidently, there was a temple. The *dehalī* is quite similar to those found at Mājgāon and Tezpur, already described. It bears a *kalpavṛkṣha* design in the centre. In the campus of the residence of Mr. R.C. Choudhury and late Das, there are plenty of stone slabs, some of them bearing designs and sculptures. These slabs are seen on the boundary wall of the residences. A *staṁbha* is also noticed at the place. Most probably there was a temple in the pre-Āhom period. Similarly, in the ruins near the residences of Dr. H.K. Barpujari and Prof. A. C. Hazarika of Jorpukhurī pār in the elevated portion of the land, there was a temple. To the right of the office of the Assam Express there is a modern temple. Near the residence of Shri Bisnuram Medhi there was a heavy *dvāṛaśākhā* of a temple which has been removed to the Assam State Musem. It can easily be inferred that in that area a temple existed. Ruins are also seen in the drain in front of the Family Planning Clinic, Uzan Bazar. At the back side of the residence of late S.N. Phukan a heavey sculptured architectural piece has been lying. A heavy, but broken *dvaraśirapaṭṭi* of a temple is noticed, lying behind the Masters' Lodge near the Barun Book Agency.

Temple ruins are also noticed on the eastern bank of Dīghalīpukhurī. There is also a stone alignment. There must have been some temples in this area. On the western bank of Dīghalīpukhurī there is another alignment of dressed stone. To the west is the Judges' field where some sculptured stone pieces of some old temples have been found, while digging for some other purposes. They include a round base of a *staṁbha* (?) and *potikā* also. The present temples at Sukreśvar, on the bank of the Brahmaputra, were built in the days of the Āhoms. But it is evidenced from the sculptural remains of old temples in the area that there existed some temples in the pre-Āhom period. In the site of the M.M. Choudhury Hospital, Pānbāzār, a few broken *staṁbhas* have been found. In the area of the present residences of the Deputy Commissioner and Police Superintendent there must have been some old construction. In the campus of the Textile Institute stray pieces of an old building are seen. Near the gate of the institue a huge *staṁbha* is seen lying on the road side. *Staṁbha-adhiṣṭhānas* of the *sarvato-bhadra* type are also noticed here. Probably there was a palatial building here in the pre-Āhom period. To the west of the institute is the Āmbarā site, where many images are discovered recently. Here an alignment of some brick construction is traced. At Chalāchal, in front of the Nehru Stadium remains are noticed. A few years back a beautiful Sūrya image was discovered here which is being preserved at the residence of Sri N. Deka. Probably in the elevated portion of land there was a temple in which the image was installed. At Śāntipur also stray remains of an old temple are noticed and a few sculptures of the pre-Āhom period have been removed to the Assam State Museum. At Navagraha where the nine planets are worshipped in the aniconic form, in a temple built in the days of the Āhoms, it has a bearing, for, it has a name as a seat of astronomical studies which seems to furnish a clue for the identification of *Prāgjyotishapura* with Guwahati. Though the present temple is of very late construction, yet the remnants of an old temple can be seen. At Navagraha cemetery recently a boat of burnt clay was dug up.

Due to lack of proper preservation, it has now been totally damaged. Earlier, another similar boat was dug up in the Guwahati University campus which is under preservation at the site. The use of these objects are not clear. However, these type of things are rarely found. At Hengerābārī also some ruins of a temple are noticed. At Basisthāśram there must have existed a temple in the pre-Āhom period, as the broken architectural pieces lying around the place show. From the nature of the ruins in Guwahati it can be postulated that Guwahati which is identifiable with *Prāgjyotishapura* had in the past many temples and palatial buildings, as it was the principal town in this region and the capital of some kings of *Kāmarūpa* for many years.

RUINS IN THE NOWGAON DISTRICT : In many places of this district archaeological remains of the period under review have been noticed. Temple ruins are visible at Jogījān, Mathorbārī, or Devasthān, Chang-chowki, Ākāśīgaṅgā, Mikirātī and in other places. Jogījān ruins are located at a distance of about 9 km either from Jamunāmukh or from Hojāi railway station. Near the ruins, to the south, is the Jogījān stream which is much wider at this place. At the site three little mounds are noticed. Each of the mounds contains the ruins of a temple. The northernmost mound has yielded several valuable architectural designs, carved on different pieces of stone. There is a *rupapaṭṭikā* with miniature *śikharas* and the figures of Gaṇeśa. One piece of stone shows beads, Kīrttimukha and pallava designs. There is one *dvāraśākhā* bearing the figures of a *Pujārinī* and a *Narṭakī*. These three ruined temples served as the gateway to the main temples which were located at a distance of about 1 km from them. The ruins of the main temples lead us to infer that the temples were huge. The architectural designs of these ruined temples are of high order. Massive blocks of stone with various floral designs are seen lying in disorder. The stone used, seems to be granite with a high proportion of quartz in it. Bricks are also seen here. There are two big Śivaliṅgas of black basalt. The area of the compound of these ruined temples is sixteen acres of land, bounded on all sides by brick and mud walls. Inside the compound there are five other small mounds each of which contains some stone blocks with sculptural and architectural designs, "partly buried under white ant mounds".[51] There were, probably, five small shrines sheltering each a Śivaliṅga. About two km north of this site at Rājbāri, ruins of a temple are noticed. Here a stone image of Umā-Maheśvara, evidently of the ruined temple, is seen, which has been regularly worshipped.

Mathorbāri, which literally means a high mound that contains a temple, is a village in the Bārapujā mouza and is situated about 5 km north of Rohā. There are ruins of an old stone temple on a slightly elevated mound. The ruins consist of two small *addishthānas* with beautiful carvings which probably contained some *vigrahas*, one *dvāraśirapaṭṭi* with Gaṇeśa in the centre, one *dehalī* depicting two lions and a vase, several *sarvatobhadra-stambha-pīṭhas* and some other pieces with *pallava* decoration. It is very likely that there was a Vishṇu temple.[52]

Chāng-chowkī is about four km from Kāmpur on the right bank of Kopilī. The modern sanctuary at Chāngchowkī is just on the bank of the river. There are some old architectural ruins, an old temple and sculptural pieces. One *dvāraśākhā*, with the figures of *dvārapāla*, *Pujarinī* and *Nartakī*, another slab bearing a *mithuna* (pair), and a *viśvapadma* are kept here. They are in a very bad state of preservation. To the eastern part of the village, a slab of stone, looking like a *śirapaṭṭi*, is seen bearing three small figures of Vishṇu, kept under a shade for worship. The place is known as Garakhīāthān, literally meaning, the place of worship of the cowherds.[53]

All these ruins were brought from Math-Barī located at a distance of about one-and-a-half kilometer south of the village, just near Jāljori-Mikirgāon. The place is elevated and there is a trace of an old moat roundabout the site. The ruins of the temple, belonging to the pre-Āhom period, are almost buried under the mound. One *dvāraśirapaṭṭi* with the figure of Gaṇeśa in the centre and a *sarvatobhadra-stambha-pīṭha* has been lying there.[54]

Ākāśīgaṅgā is at a distance of about 10 km from Dvavakā on Diphu road. The actual site is just below some waterfalls and exactly behind it there stands a range of hills. The ruins which are Śaivite in character, covering an area of about an acre of land belonged to one or two temples of the pre-Āhom period. A good number of stone blocks of different sizes with or without designs or carving are lying scattered. At the place there is a sanctuary where regular worship is held. The ruins mainly include *staṁbhas*, *staṁbha-śiras* some with carvings, *citrita-gavāksha*, *āmalakas*, *dvāraśirapattis*, *dehalīs*, *śākhās*, *pranālas*, *pīṭhas* and moulded *pādāṅga* which recall the Chalukyan style of decoration.[55] A square piece of stone depicts the courses of *akshamālā* over a *tilaka* design placed in its turn between two leaves. Panels showing Saivite divinities and miniature *śikharas*, pieces of *pādāṅgas* with projecting petals, *viśvapadma*, cucumber shaped *staṁbhas* with octagonal *pīṭhas* and central belts, "The cucumbers rising out of lotus calyx",[56] bases with vayālas flanking *staṁbha-śira* with cut ends of joists in the shape of patralatā, held by leafy belts, *etc.* tend to prove that the ruins belonged to a temple dedicated to Śiva.[57] Traces of bricks are also found at this place. Now it is not possible to trace the plan of the temple. From the existing ruins, it can be postulated that the temple or temples at the place must have been stone-built where bricks were also used to some extent. The broken architectural and sculptural pieces bear the style of A.D. 9th-10th century.

At Mikirāti, a village, about 1 km from Davokā ruins of pre-Āhom temples are noticed. The nature of the ruins leads us to conclude that there was a group of temples. Now in the actual site a few stone images are kept under a tinshed. A big tree has grown up in an original *garbhagṛha* of a temple at the site and the tree has caused considerable damage to the *bhitti* portion of the *garbhagṛha*. The remnants of the truncated *garbhagṛha* prove that it was a brick-built shrine. The Śivaliṅga that was enshrined in it is shill *in situ*. The small *garbhagṛha* of which the upper portion is completely damaged has each in its four corners a *laghustaṁbha* half of which is projected. The *laghustaṁbhas* the upper portion of which are broken and missing are brickbuilt like the *bhitti* portion. From the size of the brick it appears, that the shrine was definitelly built in the pre-Āhom age.

To a little north-west of this ruined shrine another ruined temple is noticed. Heaps of chiselled stones are seen scattered over the place. It appears that this was a stone temple, built in the pre-Āhom age. However, the dvāra of the temple and other sculptured images are not seen in the heap. It is possible that the stone sculptures that are lying under the big tree inside the shade were removed from this heap of ruins. To a little south-west of the ruined temples a few mounds are noticed in a row. Each of these mounds contain the remains of that *garbhagṛha* of a shrine, as the existing evidences show. The shrines must have been erected to face the north and their *adishthānas* were sunken. A few years back a broken place of stone carrying some figures and sculptural design, was noticed infront of one of these ruined *garbhagṛhas*. Now it is not seen. From one of these ruined *garbhagṛha*, which are now converted into small mounds, Sri G.N. Bhuyan and Sri P. Sarma, Department of Archaeology and State Museum, Assam, dug out a few earthen jars containing some substance supposed to be rice starch or allied objects, in 1970. R.M Nath[58] thinks that the ruins at the site might have belonged to seven temples. At present most of the mounds are dug and levelled down as the cultivators are trying to bring them under plough. The remnants of some of the mounds have led him to infer that the *garbhagṛhas* were lower in level than the *maṇḍapas*. The traces of *maṇḍapas* are now almost nil. In one small pieces of stone *puṣpapatra* decoration and other pieces showing the *gaja-vyala* motif, *stambha-sira, sarvatabhadra stambha pīṭha*, Kīrttimukha are lying at the site.[59]

Kāwaimārī is at a distance of about 8km from Kāmpur on the south bank of Kapalī river, near Chāng-chowkī. The ruins are located to the north of the Kāwaimarī village. There was a big temple in the centre and four small ones on four corners, making the whole group a *pañchāyatana*. All the four shrines in the corners are now in ruins and white ants have grown over the ruins. The *adishthāna* of the main temple was dug up by the local people. Various sizes of slabs are lying around the site, some of them bearing designs. A slab kīrttimukha like floral design, two *rūpapaṭṭikās*, each bearing five miniature temples, or śikharas, found usually in in the pre-Āhom temple architecture, are also noticed.[60] The worth mentioning objects of the ruins are two beautiful images of Vishṇu, one in the *āṣana* posture and the other in the *sthānaka* attitude. The latter is quite big. Evidently, it was installed in the main temple. The stone, used here, is hard gneiss. The ruins may on stylistic ground be placed in 11th-12th century A.D.

Gāchtal ruins are located at a distance of about 4 km from Dabakā near the Dabakā-Nowgaon road. According to T.N. Ramchandran, the ruins are of at least two Śiva temples, each perhaps consisting of a *garbhagṛha*, a *pārvakaksha* and a *maṇḍapa*.[61] According to R.M. Nath, there are three mounds strewn over with stone blocks and its is presumed that the northen one was temple proper, *i.e. garbhagṛha*, the middle one was *maṇḍapa* and the southern one was the *nāta-maṇḍapa*.[62] Whatever might be the plan of the temple or temples, it is true that they were Śiva temples, as is evidenced from the ruins. Now most of the ruins are removed from the site and preserved in the Moran Park, Nowgaon. There are four *dvāras*. The *dvārasirapaṭṭis* are almost plain, showing the figure of the Gaṇeśa in the middle. The *dvāra śākhās* invariably contain the figures of dvārapāla, Pūjārinī and Narttakī, sometimes a mendicant at the bottom, with flowers and coiled snakes. The snakes are seen throughout the length and breadth of the *śākhās*. Sometimes, the coiled snakes have their hoods downward, sometimes upward making the form of *sarpa sākhā* or *sarpapaṭṭi*. One *dehalī* has two elephants and a tree in the middle. Another *dehalī* shows two retreating lions and a vase in the middle. Other architectural fragment worth mentioning are *viśvapadma*, *stambha-pīṭha* of odd shape, *stambha-śiras* shaped like *āmalako* and stone pieces with recessed edges of the *sarvatobhadra* type.[63] The presence of a figure of Śiva and figures of Saivite deities, Śivaliṅga,[64] *etc*. amply proves that the temples were dedicated to Śiva. Dikshit says that the vase and retreating lion motif on the *dehalī* tend to suggest the late Gupta influence. He further says that the remains may date back to the 10th-11th centuries.[65] The *śirapaṭṭī* decoration, as we have seen in the *dvāra* at *gāchtal*, which is datable to to *c*. A.D. 9th century. So, on stylistic consideration, possibly, it will be justified to place the *gāchtal* ruins in the 9th-10th century. It should be admitted that as the stone quality here is of inferior type, the artist could not do good work.

At Gosāin-jurī extensive temple ruins have been noticed. It is located at a distance of about 5km from Dabakā. The ruins are quite similar to those at Jogījān. At this place there are as many as eight mounds. In the first mound a *pīṭha* of an image is found. Near the *pīṭha* a *dvārasīrapaṭṭi* is seen. Traces of a brick structure of a small shrine is found, as at Jogījān. On the second mound, which is also small adjacent to the first, a *dehalī* embeded in earth and a *dvāraśirapaṭṭi* of black stone showing lotus in the centre are lying. Except these pieces all other architectural pieces are of gneiss. The third mound which is low, yields as many as eight gneiss pieces, two of which bear frontal friezes with the design of *patra-puṣpa* inset between *akshamālā*.[66] A fragment of a *stambha-śira* showing on either side the design of *gavākshas* surrounded by trefoil, is noticed in this mound. Another pieces of the same stone, *viz*. gneiss, found near the same mound, is possibly from a *stambha* which depicts a row of recessed and projecting moulding. The fourth mound yeilds traces of quartz piece and a broken *stambha* of gneiss On the fifth is seen a *dvāraśirapaṭṭi* showing the *yavanikā* design. The sixth mound yields a round gneiss piece, recalling in shape the "moonstone of south India and Ceylon.[67] The seventh mound is higher than the other mounds and it reveals the traces of brick structure. There is a stone image of Vishṇu. The last mound is comparatively bigger in size. Bricks and brick-bats are lying scattered here abundently. The important architectural objects here—a *dvāraśirapaṭṭī* and a *dehalī*. A *pīṭha* of some unknown image and an image of *Vishṇu* are also fonnd here. The Vishṇu image seems to bear the *Pāla* traits of Bihar and Bengal.[68]

About 3km south of the Hojāi dispensary, there is a village with Manipuri population from the Cachar district. The village is now known as Āmtalā. Here is an old tank ; on its east bank a mound contains the ruins of a shrine. It was a stone temple, small in size. There is one circular platform of stone, nicely levelled on sides. This was perhaps, the *garbhagṛha*. There is also one *dvāraśirapaṭṭī* with "straight line carvings, and one end of a corner of a cornice with bead and acanthus foliage."[69] There is a *dvāraśākhā* at the bottom of which three usual figures are seen.

Within Hojai area there is a place named Kondoli near which ruins of the holy shrine of Kamalādevī exist on the top of the hill. In the Kondoli hill there are many rock-cut caves which are perhaps, as Nath supposed, the residences of the *siddhās*.[70] But at present the caves have become the abode of black bears.

Maudāṅgā or Devasthān is, about 15 km, as the crow flies, east of Dabakā. Near the road temple ruins are seen strewn over an area of about ten acres of land, now covered with vegetation. The ruins must have belonged to a group of temples. There are seven mounds containing bricks and stone blocks. Two pairs of *dvāra-śākhās* are seen at the site. Each of them bear figures of a dvārapāla and on the upper portion sarpa and *pātra-pushpa-paṭṭa*. A *rūpapaṭṭikā* stone bears the figure of Ardhanārīśvara[71] in the centre in the lower panel and in the top panel an image of Gajalakshmī. Figures of Gaṇeśa and Vishṇu, *etc* also occur in this piece of stone which looks like a *dvāraśirapaṭṭī*. Another piece of chiselled stone, probably a *śirapaṭṭī* decorated with only *patra-pushpa* designs, is lying in the ruins. A beautiful Śivaliṅga, carved from a schist stone, placed not on the usual oval yoṇipīṭha, but on a beautiful *pīṭha* of some images, as found at Mikirāti, Mathor-bāri and Gosāinjuri, is seen in this place.[72] The main attraction of the ruins is a splendid image of Kārtikeya datable to about A.D. 8th century. Now the image is seen sadly broken into two pieces. As in Gāchtal, here also the stone quality of the *dvāra* is bad and it has affected the quality of art.

At Sitājakhalā on the bank of the Killing river, about 3 km south of the National Highway at Amblighāt, there is a hillock of solid granite rock rising gradually upward from the river. At a turning point of the river, on its left bank there seems to have existed a small temple on the top of the hillock of which some remains have been traced. On the solid rock from the location of the ruined temple to the lowest water level in the river below a flight of steps has been noticed. The middle of the steps are covered with sand and vegetations. Twenty-five steps are visible. Nath thinks that in all in the flight not less than hundred steps were cut.[73] These were made evidently for carrying water to the temple which once existed.

Mahādeosāl is a small village, about 8 km from Dharamtual railway station and about 25 km from the Nowgaon town, on the left side of the National Highway. On the northern side of the village there is an elevated place and here the ruins occur. A *dvāra-śākhā* showing the figures of dvārapāla, Pujārinī and Nartakī at the bottom and several rows of triple figures of Vishṇu, one above the other in the upper part reaching probably *śirapaṭṭī*, has been preserved in the local sanctuary and is being worshipped as the presiding deity of the place. A similar *śākhā* is noticed at Budā-Gosāin temple, as we shall show. In the ruins the interesting finds include a *dvāraśirapaṭṭī*, showing live *śikharas* in the topmost *paṭṭa*, *patrapushpa* design in the middle paṭṭa and an image, possibly, of Vishṇu in the lowest *paṭṭa*. The Kāwaimārī and Jogījān ruins have also yielded such objects. Besides these, some other important architectural objects have been located in the ruins. One of these is an *astadala-*

padma, probably used as *viśvapadma*, i.e., the ceiling stone of the garbhagṛha. Another find is a piece, carved with a beaded acanthus. The lower portion of a *śākhā*, with a fourhanded *dvārāpāla* (?) at the bottom and in its bevelled portion the *patra-pushpa* design, a portion of another *śākhā*, decorated with simple *pushpa-lata* design, and several carved *staṁbha-pīṭhas*[74] are the other discovered objects.

About 3 km east of Akaśīgaṅgā falls, there is another beautiful waterfall, known as Urdhagaṅgā. There is a village nearby, known as Urdhagaṅgā or Udha-gāon. About 1 km west of this village just at the foot-hill, there is a big compound with high walls on an earthen mound, inside which two tanks can be seen.[75] About 2 km further west is the waterfall. Here the ruins of a temple (?) are noticed. At Vāsundharī, 4 km from Chāparmukhu Railway station across the Kapilī river, some rock-cut images of Gaṇeśa and of a female deity are noticed. The image of the female deity is under thick layers of vermilion. Nath says that this may represent Jagaddhātrī.[76] However, the real idenity of the image cannot be traced unless the layer of vermilion is removed. At present regular worship is held at the place. There is no trace of any old temple.

Baḍgaṅgā is to the south-west of the Mahāmāyā hill, Mikir hills district, but well connected with the plains of the Nowgaon district. To reach the actual site of the ruins which is located to the left bank of the Baḍagaṅgā, a streamlet, one has to walk about 3 km. The place of ruins is slightly elevated. Just on the bank of the stream there are two big rocks. To the left of this huge rock the ruins occur. The plan of the ruined temple can somehow be traced. The *garbhagṛha* of the temple was built with hard sandstone. The *maṇḍapa* and the *nātamaṇḍapa* were probably constructed with bricks.[77] The plan of the *garbhagṛha* has been disturbed considerably by the local people, while searching for gold ; but the brick structures of the other parts of the temple have simply sunk down probably owing to earthquakes. Now here vegetations have come up. In front of the traces of *nātamaṇḍapa* there are two figures of bull. The important objects of ruins of the main temple are—a *viśvapadma* and a *dehalī* with the vase and retreating lion motif, flanked by two dancing scenes. Near the site at a little distance, under a shed, an image of Umāmaheśvara, one *pīṭha* of an image of Vishṇu from which the actual image of the god is missing and parts of a broken image of Vishṇu can be seen. The huge rocks which stand on the bank of the stream, mentioned already, bear each a figure of dvārapāla. In between these rocks there is a small passage. The left rock bears a figure of monkey. On the inside face of the left rock and facing the passage, there are 3¼-line writing, engraved on it. The inscription is datable to *c*. A.D. 6th century. The inscription is known as Badgaṅga rock-cut inscription.

Stray objects of archaeological value are found in many places. Burī gosāinthān[78] yields a *dvāraśākhā* of Vishṇu in the upper part and the figure of dvārapāla, at the bottom. A *dvāra* is noticed at Jiājuri also.[79] It is devoid of any decoration.

RUINS IN THE KĀRBI-ĀNGLONG DISTRICT : Some of the sites in this hill district yield ruins of old temples of which mention may be made of Mahāmāyāthān and Buḍāgosāinthān. Mahāmāyāthān is located at a distance of about 3 km east of Baḍgaṅgā ruins in the Mikir hills. The local name of the hill on which the ruins occur is the Mahāmāyā hill. The ruins of the temple occur on the bank of an old tank surrounded by hillocks. Now the tank has become shallow and full of quagmire. The temple was situated on the east bank of the tank. The temple was small. The inside dimension was 199 cm × 199 cm. It collapsed and is overgrown with two big trees on three corners. Some portions of two walls have been held in position by the roots of the trees.[80] On the western wall, a slab of stone bears a human figure, seated in *padmāsana*. There is also noticed a *viśvapadma*. Nath[81] further says that there was an yard measuring 1051 cm × 612 cm, enclosed with a *prākāra* in front of the temple which faced the south. Amongst the other ruins at the site mention may be made of a *gavāksha* (?), *śirapaṭṭī* with Gaṇeśa in the centre, a broken *stambha* having an octagonal *śira*, square *pīṭha* and bearing some images of gods, Vishṇu, Brahmā, *etc.* on each face. One stone *kalaśa*, with decoration at the base and four rings at the centre on four sides for holding it and with a central hole through its length, one square *stambha* with a *pūrnavikaśita-padma*, engraved on it, a broken slab bearing an animal figure (lion ?), a mutilated female figure and two *āsanas* with four legs of some divinities, cut out from a single block of stone. Here some caverns are noticed, scooped into the rocks of the hill.[82]

About a mile to the north of Dokmokā on the bank of the Dikharu river there are noticed the ruins of a temple known as Buḍāgosāinthān. The ruins, being now covered with thick jungle, are not easily accessible. The temple at the place collapsed probably many years back. The *dvāra* of the temple is still standing. The *śākhās* are buried in the earth. The *śirapaṭṭi* bears some carvings of straight lines. There is another *śirapaṭṭi*, bearing three figures of Vishṅu with consorts and in between two figures of dvārapālas. There is another portion of the *śākhā*, bearing a dvārapāla, a Pujāriṇī and Nartakī and above these figures there are five rows of icons of divinities, each row consisting of three figures—figures of the deity and consorts. There are seen some steps of bricks from the temple site to the river.[83] Temple ruins are also noticed at Tārābasā, Jetelipunhurī, Dīghalpānī, Gaṇeśthan and other places. Architectural and sculptural pieces collected from Phulbarī and Padampukhurī are noticed in the premises of District Council Office and at Diphu Park, Diphu. However, N.P. Choudhury has briefly noticed these ruins.[84]

RUINS IN SIBSĀGAR DISTRICT : In this district quite a few places yield ruins of the pre-Āhom architecture. The ruins of Deoparvat are interesting. The ruins are in the hill about 3 km south of the National Highway at Bokākāt and near the Numaligarh Tea Estate. The hill on which the ruins occur is so called, because it is dedicated to a *deva, i.e.* Śiva. The ruins belonged to an interesting temple structure the like of which is not found anywhere else in the district. The floor of the original *garbhagṛha* of the temple with a mortise for holding the tenon of the image of the principal deity, enshrined herein, still remains *in situ*. The *korotaka*, which bears the carving of a *visvapadma* is commonly met with, in the ruins of pre-Āhom period in the State. The *viśapadma*, in its seed-vessel, bears the figure of a vidyādhara. Two massive *dvāra-śākhās* are worth mentioning. They bear *patra-pushpa* and other decorative designs and sculptural representions. One *śākhā* shows a *dvārapalikā* wearing a *mukuṭa* and perforated *patra-kuṇḍalas*. A few coping pieces are lying at the site. One piece has been brought to the Assam State Museum. Holes on the underside of these pieces suggest that they were fixed on the *toraṇa*. Remains of what looks like a *mukha-maṇḍapa*, in front of the *garbhagṛha* and *maṇḍapa*, are also noticed. Here the *stambha-pīṭhas* and *stambha-śiras* are well carved and massive. A *stambha* shows design like the fan-palm. The *stambha-śiras* show huge *kīrttimukhas* or *Vanaspati* or *Kāla-makara* decorations, as they are known in Java.[85] The coping piece also has Japanese affinity.[86] Pieces of stone, employed in the *adhishthāna* superstructure, are found scattered over the site. Some of them bear beautiful carvings. Two broken pieces of *rūpapaṭṭikās* showing each a row of busts of female figures, holding lotuses, have been brought to the Assam State Museum. Probably, they represent *apsarās* (heavenly nymphs) and the friezes were employed somewhere at a certain height to support the super-structure. Ramachandran rightly thinks that various *rūpapaṭṭikas* at the site must have come from the *adhishthāna* and *maṇḍapa*.[87]

As regards the periodicity of the ruins, Ramachandran has contradicted himself by saying in one place that the ruins belong to about A.D. 11th or 12th century and by saying that the elegantly sculptured blocks of sandstone recall the late Gupta art.[88] If the sculptures bear late Gupta traits, then the ruins may be placed at the latest in A.D. 9th-10th century and not in A.D. 11th-12th century. From the stylistic point of view, we think it is right to place the ruins in A.D. 9th-10th century.

On the same hill near these ruins, remains of another smaller temple are noticed. The plain *stambhas*, *stambbhaśira* and *pīṭha* of which are embedded in the earth in thick jungles. A *stambha pīṭha*, showing *sarvatobhadra* type, is seen lying nereby. Yet, another ruined structure, probably a *maṇḍapa*, was found. Some slabs of *āmalaka* designs are noticed to the east of the Deoparvat ruins at a little distance.[89] There are some more ruins of brick on an adjacent hillock to the north of Deoparvat. Many stone blocks with architectural carvings, ready for building construction, are seen on the south bank of Rangsali, a stream flowing about 2 km south of the Deoparvat hill.[90]

At the foot of the Deoparvat hill in the Numalīgarh tea-estate, on the left side of the Bokākhāt-Dimāpur road, there is a modern sanctuary, called Śivathān. Some pieces of carved stone were removed to this place form the nearly Deoparvat ruins.

It is a Śaiva temple. A big *liṅga* was brought here from the Deoparvat ruins and installed here.[91] Most of the stone pieces bear sculptures and these are described in the sculpture section. Some sculptural pieces, including two pieces of stone showing *gajathāna* motif were brought to the Kāmarūpa Anusandhan Samiti, Guwahati. Now these pieces are in the Assam State Museum. Barring two small *stambhas*, evidently belonging to a balustrade found here, no architectural pieces of importance are noticed here. Each of the *stambhas* are "surmounted by a *bali-pīṭha*, shaped like an inverted *padma*."[92]

Deopāni is situated near Garampānī on the Golaghat-Dimapur road in the forested region of the Golaghat sub-division, about 35 km from the town of the same name. Here in a modern sanctuary of tin shed old images of different gods and goddesses are installed for regular worship. It is learnt from the local people that the old images which may date to *c.* A.D. 8th century were dug up from the heap of ruins. Still there is a trace of heap of bricks which no doubt contains the remnants of the temple of the pre-Āhom period. A slight digging may reveal further potentiality of the site. The main image of the temple erected in the modern time is a huge image of Durgā in *śānta-rūpa.* At Rājbarī near Barpathar, and Teliśal ruins of pre-Āhom period are noticed.

In front of the campus of the residence of the sub-divisional officer, Sibsagar, there are some architectural and sculptural remains One piece represents a *dvāra-śākhā* with decoration and usual figures. K.L. Barua thinks that these are probably from a Vishṇu temple having existed in the neighbourhood.[93] To whatever deity the temple might have been dedicated, it is likely that the ruins may, no doubt, be placed in the period of our discussion. At Carāideo, where the first capital of the Āhom rulers was established by Cukāphā, there were some ruins of some architecture of the older period. But now on the mound at the place only one or two stone *stambhas* are noticed. But it is true that some religious establishment did exist there, for the Varāhī king invited the first king of the Āhom dynasty to establish the capital at Carāideo, where already temples built possibly by the Barāhī kings[94] existed. However, at this place, there is no evidence to say that in the pre-Āhom period architects had their activity. The huge *dvāradehalī*, cut into two pieces now preserved in the Assam State Museum, was collected from Hāhearaā, near the Sibsagar town. It carries the common features that existed in the pre-Āhom period, vase and two retreating lions' motif at the centre and a dancing scene on either end.

REMAINS IN THE DIBRUGARH DISTRICT : At Kuṇḍlinagar about 25 km east of the Sadiya town on the Kume border ruins of an old temple are noticed. There was a temple at the place, known as copper temple at Lāmreśvara Mandir, where human sacrifice used to be made and which was of the important centres of the śāktas, mentioned in the *Kālikāpuraṇa*.[95] Originally, the temple in all days of the Chutiās who ruled in this region before the advant of the Āhoms to the Brahmputra

Valley in the beginning of A.D. 13th century as already noted earlier. The old ruins found around Sadiya were described by Hanney in 1848. He has ascribed the fortifications at the place to Bhismak.[96] It appears he has confused this with the ruins at Bhismak nagar, further east of Sadiya. The ruins of Bhismak nagar, according to the popular legend belong to King Bismak, who ruled there. Now the ruins of Bhismak nagar fall in Arunachal Pradesh. In a note prepared by Dolton in 1848, the ruins of the Jāmreśvari Copper temple existed till that year and the copper root was then lying on the ground. The temple building was made of stone blocks, joined together by iron pins and the the *prākāra* of the temple, made of brick, measured 130yds by 97 yds. As the temple had its roof made of *tāmra* (copper), the female deity, worshipped in the temple, was called *Tāmreśvarī.*

Bloch[97] visited the site in 1906 and published a report alongwith two photograps, showing two dvāraśākhās, a *dvāraśirapaṭṭi* and some blocks of stone of the *bhiṭṭi* portion of the *garbhagṛha* which is completely levelled down. The *dvāraśākhās* bear each a figure of dvārapāla. Above the figures of the dvārapālas, the *śākhās* are not decorated with *paṭṭa* bearing various designs, as are commonly found in the pre-Āhom temple *dvāraśākhās.* On stylistic grounds, these architectural pieces cannot be placed in a period prior to A.D. 13th century. The ruins revealed a a good number of terracotta sculptures which will be described in the next chapter. These pieces were fixed into the inner sides of the city wall, except the eastern one. Now there is no trace of this temple—everything has been eroded by the Brahmaputra.

REMAINS IN THE NORTH LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT : A few sites bearing the testimony of the pre-Āhom culture are noticed in this District. At Malinithān near the North Lakhimpur town exist extensive ruins of temple and other architectural remains. Now these ruins fall within the boundary of Arunachal Pradesh.[98] Another extensive old site, Māyāpur,[99] has been towards the north of North Lakhimpur town, in Arunachal Pradesh. Some images of gods and goddesses such as India, Gaṇeśa, Durga, etc. are also reported from both the ruins. Though the ruins of both the places are in the interior corner of the country, from the nature of the ruins it is well proved that the limit of the flourishing Hindu culture was extended even to some parts of Arunachal Pradesh in the past.

On the bank of the Sārhī river stands the Govindapur village.[100] It is not very far from Dhākuā-khānā. There a temple of a *devalaya* exists. The present temple was built during the rule of the Āhoms. There are some beautiful images of Śiva, Durgā, Gaṅgā and Manasā. The temple, it seems, was renovated and there had existed some older temples at the site. The local people regard it as an old *devālaya.*

The Ghārmārā-*satra* is situated just near the North-Lakhimpur town. Originally, this *satra* was at Ghārmārā near Dhenukhanā. Ruins of a brick temple are noticed here. Two old tanks also exist in the place in a very bad state.

There is an old image of Vāsudevathān, on the bank of the river Champārā in the Gohāin Mauza.[101] The image is reported to have been carved on a block of stone. The existence of old brick bats at the place indicates that once there was a temple. Though a beautiful Mauza in the Darrang district, yet we can not say that this image, which belongs to *c.* A.D. 11th century was originally installed in the Bārkalikāthān of Kālāharī. The local people say that it was originally installed in the Māghnowā *dol* in the North Lakhimpur district. But it pounds to be a piece of archroism the temple at the place was built in the Āhom period. Probably the image was originally enshrined in some old ruined temple which is yet to be traced out.

Ruins of an old stone temple have been found on the bank of a large tank, known as Gosānipukhurī in the Lāluk Mauza.[102] On the way to the main heap of the remains, there is lying a circular piece. It is 91cm in diameter and has got two circular canals carved in it, the inside canal articulating a raised spot of about 92cm in diameters.[103] It might have been a part of some architectural member of the ruined stone temple. It is also possible that it was an instrument (*Yantra*) for worship, the indistinct object at the centre representing perhaps a symbol of the female creative principle of *śakti*. This, as S. Barua thinks, is more probable because by tradition this place was the seat of a *śākta* temple known as Lonepanī Devālaya[104] There is another devālaya in that area, named Moorabhāgā-devālaya. It is also reported that there is a temple of Kāmākhyā, frequented by mountaineers and inhabitants of upper Assam.[105] There are two *staṁbhas*, about 246cm apart and about 122cm in height. The principal remains of the structure now visible consist of one broken *dvāra-śākhā*, one *dehalī*, one *dvāra-śirapaṭṭi* and many slabs bearing used in the building. The *śirapaṭṭi* is foursided and measures approximately 184cm × 31cm × 139cm. One of its sides bears ornamental, consisting of seven beautiful *chandraśālā* and some other designs. All the *chandraśālās* are separated from each other by a round *laghustaṁbha*. The *dehalī* is not decorated. The most interesting item of the visible remains is the broken *dvāraśākhā* which lies near the above-mentioned parts of the *dvāra* containing the figure of a lion, riding on an elephant, *i.e.* Gajavyāla motif. The left half of the sākhā of fanciful creeper with ornamental foliage. It is expected that a slight digging would yield more finds here.[106]

C.D. Tripathi has noticed a pre-Āhom chatiā temple about 1 km away from a village named Kekuri Bebejiā on the west bank of the Dāngdhorā rivulet, about 20km west of Ghilāmāra but has not published the photograph of the temple. As we have not visited the place, we quote Tripathi liberally:[107]

> "The main structure at the place is a peculiar one. It is a one-roomed small temple or memorial; the base of the structure is octagonal having dimensions of about 3ft. each. The plinth is also octagonal and is almost entirely underground. On this octagonal plinth rise the walls to a height of about

8ft. and then coverage forming a conical roof which rises to a further height of 5ft. or 6ft. The roof is similar to the roofs of the Assam temples of later days. The thickness of the walls is about 2ft., which means that the space inside the structure is extremely small. On the south-eastern face of the structure is an arch-shaped opening measuring about 2ft. × 2ft. On the top of the structure, a thin iron rod can still be seen which must have originally supported a *kalasa*.

"Now we come to the second structure. About 30ft. to the south-east i.e., facing the opening of the temple stands a rectangular brick platform. It is about 4ft. or 4½ ft. high and the top measures about 6ft. × 4ft. The base measures about 8ft. × 6ft. and the height consists of seven or eight steps like formations made carved by mortar filling work. The top was originally dressed with stone. On it are kept pieces of stone image which are beyond recognition. However, one of these consists of a pair of feet standing on an open lotus—evidently that of the goddess. Stylistically, it is similar to the other image found in the area. About four miles east of North Lakhimpur at a temple called the temple of Nil Gohanee an exactly similar pair of stone is worshipped. Another stone piece on the platform is the *yonī pīṭha* i.e., the base of a Śivaliṅga. Other mutilated pieces are certainly of some images but cannot be identified.

"Nearly can also be seen round brick structure which is evidently a a filled-up well. I was told that before about ten years it was still fully visible and not filled up.

"About 100ft. away from the main structure is the boundary wall. It seems it was a mud wall and the whole area enclosed in these walls was about 200′ × 200′. By the northern side of the wall there is a small tank and pieces of dressed stone and possibly images can be seen lying by the edges of this tank.

"Surrounding the northern and eastern sides of the walled area is an arc-shaped long natural pond which in Assamese is called a 'beel'. Traces of an old path leading to this pond from the temple through the boundary wall can still be seen.

"I have tried to give a fair idea of the ruins. The picture that emerges is that of a place of worship having a temple, a *'Vedi'* i.e., platform and a wall and also having a newly-made tank outside.

According to Tripathi,[108] the main shrine is so peculiar that it is not easy to say what type of worship was performed inside it. It is almost impossible to enter it, as the opening is hardly 2′ × 2′. This has led him to think that the place was meant for esoteric worship and as no Āhom temple is constructed in this manner, Tripathi likes to place it in a period before the advant of the Āhoms from the east.

The platform at the site was possibly used for keeping the images and the *Śivaliṅga* to be worshiped in the open air, which is a rare arrangement for worship. The size of the brick, used in the platform, tallies with that of the pre-Āhom bricks. Taking all these factors into consideration, Tripathi[109] likes to place it in A.D. 13th century and says that this monument must have been constructed during the regime of the Chutia and thus he wants to give the pride of Hate, as the standing oldest temple in Assam, to this monument. The Guptesvar temple at Singri was renovated in the pre-Āhom architectural style. But the date of the renovation is not known to us. It is likely—that the work was done in the early Āhom period. As such, it appears, Tripathi rightly says that the temple in question is the standing temple in Assam. However, a published photograph or the plan of the temple, described by Tripathi, would have been a great help to us in the determination of its age.

EARTH-WORK : The earth-work, done in the period under review, was not of less importance than the temple building and other architectural work. It was probably customary to dig a tank mear the temple in the pre-Āhom period, as in the Āhom-period, because water was very essential for deity worship in the temple.

Deghalī Pukhurī, which stands just in front of the Assam State Museum, Guwahati, is one of the important antiquarian objects which has enhanced the beauty of the city of Guwahati. This tank was executed definitely in the Pre-hom age. But it is difficult to say exactly in whose reign it was caused to be dug. According to the popular tradition,[110] it was believed to date back to the time of Bhagadatta. It is said that the tournament of archery arranged in connection with the marrige of Bhagadatta's daugher Bhānumatī, was performed on a platform constructed over this tank. A fish was tied aloft at the end of a long pole and the great archer Karṇa looking at the image on the water of the tank aimed over head and pierced the eye of the fish with an arrow. Thus, Karṇa won the tournament and obtained Bhānumatī, but on his request, she was given to Duryodhana in marriage. On account of the relationship, Bhagadatta later sided Duryodhana in the battle of Kurukshetra. So it appears that this bears a strong legend.

This tank more elongated than rectilinear in sizes. On either side of the tank lengthwise there are high banks. It is likely that this tank was dug in the form of a channel of the Brahmaputra. On the north tank stands the building of the Guwahati High Court, just to the north of which flows the mighty Brahmaputra. It is also found on examination that the soil under the High Court was disturbed. It is possible that the mouth of the channel was ultimately, for some reason or other closed. Our contention was further strengthened by the fact that there is no high bank of the tank on the southern side. The Assam Museum stands on the southern bank which is quite low. Further to the south, the land is of the same level. Across the Guwahati railway station the Chalachal beel starts. Even now in the rainy season this area becomes water-logged ; our conjecture is that the Deghalī tank was once linked with this marshy land or *beel* and this channel faciliated navigation.

Another big tank of pre-Āhom age exist in Tezpur. The tank is known as Harjjar Pukhurī and is said excavated by Harjjarvarman, who ruled at Tezpur in A.D. 9th century. The tank covers an area of about seventy acres of land. It is slightly smaller than the Śivasāgar and Jaysāgar tank excavated by the Āhom kings at Śibsagar. This tank at Tezpur had its high banks on all the four sides. But it is a pity that the high banks of this tank were cut in places in order to let out the water and as a result the tank becomes almost dry in cold weather. The southern bank is almost demolished and over it some government houses have been built. The berm of the tank is now used as the race course and it is more than 3060 cm.

Towards the north-west of the Harjjar pukhurī there was another tank. It was smaller in size, known as Bālipukhurī. It was also very likely a pre-Āhom tank. But it is a pity that the tank is almost damaged by the construction of houses by the defence department on the banks and the lingering trace of the tank will also be missing soon. A tank, named after Kubhānda, minister of Bāṇa, is reported to have still existed in Tezpur.[111]

Small old tanks are innumerable, many of which are full of vegetation which has made the tank shallow. In the Nowgaon and Kāmarūpa districts, specially, remnants of quite a good number of old tanks are noticed. There are also a larger number of tanks and earth embankments in the Viśvanāth area, attributed to Ārimatta. The embankment ran from Pratāpapura to the Dafalā range for about 18km. There were other fortifications at the foot of the Dafalā hills. There are remains of fortfications too. The stone walls are carved with marks, similar to those at Sadiya. There is a large fort consisting of exceedingly high earth-works in the middle of the town. To the north-east of the citadel is an enclosure of about 100 square feet made of bricks and carved stone inside.[112] Fortifications of similar nature are seen ascribed to Rāmacandra. This is supported by the Dafalā tradition that an ancient king at Assam built a fort there and it is said that Arimatta attacked the fort and killed his father.[113] Hanny has reported that in Sadiya region there were similar *remains of ramparts of stone* and brick. These, like those at Viśvanāth and Ratnapura, were probably constructed to enclose the table-land at the foothills and and thus form a place of refuge in time of invasions.[114] The whole work of rampart, is laid without cement of fastening. It proves the proficiency of the engineerings of those days. Extensive ruins of ancient fortifications known as Vaidargarh, still lie in the Betnā mouza of the Kāmrūp district. It is attributed to Ārimatta[115] (alias Vaidyadeva). In the Damdhamā mouza in the same district remnants of another embankment are noticed. It is called Pheṅguāgarh, attributed to Pheṅguā. In the North Guwahati area and at Jalpāigure, extensive fortifications, as defence measures, were made by Pṛthu, another king of Kāmarūpa.[116] At the top of the Narakāsur hill at Guwahati a line of ruined brick structure which was probably used as a fortification, is found. Beyond the hill near the National Highway a huge old rampart is noticed linking the hills. P. Bhattacharya wrote that the fortress of Agnipāhār at Tezpur, attributed to Bāṇa, throws "a side light on the method of architecture or the skill of masons in those far away days of antiquity.[117] But unfortunately, the present generation has no love for them. Agnipāhār, is now converted into a park and a water reserviour is constructed thereon. At Numaligarh also old and high fortifications can be seen near the remains. It appears, they belong to the pre-Āhom period.

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2. Bhattacharya, P., *Kāmarūpa Sasanavali*, 1338 *sal*, pp. 54-70.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-129.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-88.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-109.
6. *E.I.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 289-95.
7. *I.H.Q.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 12-14.
8. *E.I.*, Vol. V, pp. 181-88.
9. *A.S.S.P.*, 28th Yrs, No. I, 1893 *śaka*, pp. 85-87.
10. *E.I.*, Vol. XXXI, 1955, pt. II, pp. 67-69.
11. Inside the *garbhagrha* there was a badly weathered inscription. Now it is removed to the Commercial Museum, Guwahati University. The script of the inscription seems to bear the style of the A.D. 15th-16th century.
12. On enquiry it was learnt from an old man of the locality that in 1960 the Archaeological Survey of India did field work in the entire area, mapped it out and decided to start excavation there in the following year. But probably due to the Chinese aggression the whole plan was set aside.
13. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. II, No. I, p. 10.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *J.A.R.L.*
18. At first K.N. Dikshit discovered this ruined temple; see *ARASI*, 1922-23, pp. 98-99. Later R.D. Banerji noticed it in *ARASI.*, 1924-25, pp. 98-99.
19. The Antiquity of the ruined temple at Daparvatiā. *B.A.S.M.*, No. I, 1975, pp. 36-40,

20. *Op. cit.*, p. 40.
21. Choudhury, R.D., see "The Antiquity of the ruined temple at Daparvatiā; *B.A.S.M.*, No. 2, 1976, pp. 56-67.
22. *ARASI.*, 1906, p. 18.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Barua, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 108.
25. *ARASI.*, 1923-24, p. 80.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Op. cit.*, p. 112.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Op. cit.*, pp. 80 ff.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Op. cit.*, p. 112.
37. *Ibid.* Banerji has not clearly mentioned about the third group of ruins. Possibly the huge *dvāra-śākhā* and a slab bearing three sunker panels occupied by same figures, are included in this group, see *op. cit.*, p. 98.
38. *Ibid.*, 1925-26, p. 116.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. *ARASI.*, Vol. II, No. 4, pp. 104-105. Dalton published a paper, '*Description of Ancient Temples and Ruins at Chārduār*' in *JASB*, 1835. The name Chārduār indicates here the Chārduār region and not only town.
44. *JARS.*, Vol. II, No. 4, pp. 104-105.
45. *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 109-112.
46. For details see, *BASM.*, No. 3, pp. 92-99.
47. The place is wrongly named. The main deity of this ruined temple was Umā-Maheśvar, the composite huge image of whom still can be seen at the place of worship. It is not an image of Madana or Kāmadeva nor Madana-Rati, as mentioned by T.K. Sarma, see *JARS*, Vol. X, pp. 82-83.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Kāmarūpā*, a Souvenir, Assam Science Society, Guwahati, 1967.
51. Barua, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 117.
52. *ARASI.*, 1923-24, p. 80,

53. Nath, R.M., 'Antiquities of the Kapili and the Jamuna Valleys', *JARS.*, Vol. V, p. 29.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 28
57. *ARASI.*, 1936-37, p. 56.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. *JARS.*, Vol. V, p. 37.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
62. *ARASI*, 1936-37, p. 56.
63. *JARS.*, Vol. V, p. 32.
64. *ARASI.*, 1936-37, p. 56.
65. The liṅga has lately been removed to Itojāi, see *JARS*, Vol. V, p. 33.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *JARS.*, Vol. V, p. 31.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
73. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 36.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 21.
76. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
78. *Ibid.*, p, 24.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
80. Nath, R.M., *Background of Assamese Culture*, 1948, pl. XIX.
81. *Ibid.*, pl. XXI.
82. *JARS.*, Vol. V, p. 44.
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
86. *ARASI.*, 1936-37, p. 58.
87. *Ibid.*
88. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
89. *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 60.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
91. Nath, R.M., "*Ruins of the Śiva temple at Numaligarh*", *JARS*, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 8.
92. *ARASI.*, 1936-37, p. 57. A female *śākta* deity is also worshipped here.

93. *Ibid.*
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95. Neogi, M., *op. cit.*, p. 36.
96. Barua, B.K., H.V.S., & Murthy, *Temples and Legends of Assam*, 1965, pp. 84-88.
97. Barua, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 178.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
99. *ARASI.*, 1906-7, pp. 25-28. Fig. 4 & 5.
100. A description of the ruins is given at the appendix.
101. *JARS.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 43-49.
102. Neogi, M., *op. cit.*, p. 7.
103. *JARS.*, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 46.
104. *Ibid.*
105. *Ibid.*
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid* , p. 47.
108. "A Pre-Ahom Chutia temple in Lakhimpur district", *JARS*, Vol. XXII, 1974, pp. 35-37.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
110. *Ibid.*
111. Choudhury, P.D., & M.C. Das, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
112. *I.H.Q.*, Vol. VI, pp. 364-72.
113. *JASB.*, 1904, I, pp. 254-261; 1904 (extra no) pp. 16-19, XXIV, pp. 20-21; IV, pp. 190-91.
114. *JARS.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 43-49.
115. *JASB.*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, pp. 459 f.
116. *JARS.*, Vol. III, pp. 12 f.
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Chapter 4

Sculptures

"INDIAN sculpture is rarely found alone. From a very early period it had to serve architecture, chiefly as an ornament of the latter."[1] This observation of Sankalia well suits the sculptural wealth of Assam. But most of the sculptures, served as ornament of the architectural construction, are not found in their original places, as those works do not survive to this day. These sculptures are found in the decorative parts of the temples, namely, *bhiṭṭis*, *siṁhakarṇas*, *dvāras* and *śirapaṭṭis*. The figures of gods and goddesses are discussed in the iconography chapter. Here it is proposed to discuss other sculptural figures, designs, *etc*. The sculptures from Assam, like Indian sculptures in general,[2] may be divided into three groups :

1. Human figures,
2. Animal figures and
3. Sculptural designs.

1. **HUMAN FIGURES :** At first let us take up the terracotta figurines. Representation of human forms other than gods and goddesses is limited. In 1926 R.D. Banerji[3] discovered a few terracotta plaques containing human figurines at Daparvatiā. They were found at the site of a ruined late-Gupta temple. He has illustrated only one human figure[4] which, according to him, cannot be later in date than A.D. 6th century.[5] It is a seated figure, crossing one leg over the other (Fig. 17). The modelling of this figure which consists in the broad chest, the propor-

tionately thin waist, the well-formed hands and legs and the style in which the hands and the legs are kept necessarily connect this figure with some of the mediaeval stone-sculptures. Banerji[6] has remarked that the style of the representation of these figurines shows a very close connection between mediaeval art of Bengal and Assam and these are of the same type as those discovered at Birat in the Rangpur district (reported in the same volume) and at Pāhārpur in the Rājśāhī district. But he has neither given the description of the figures from Birat, nor has reproduced their photographs.[7] None of the Pāhārpur figures can be compared with ours, as far as the representation of the theme is concerned.[8] But from the anatomical point of view, our figure can be compared with a terracotta Buddha figure from Pāhārpur. Both the figures are seated cross-legged. The waist of each of the figures is slim, while the chest is broad. Hands of both the figures are proportionately long. The figure from Pāhārpur is in *bhūmisparśamudrā*. But our figure is in a peculiar pose. Both the hands of the figure hold something and rest on the respective knees. It appears that Banerji is right in making the above remark. However, seated cross-legged figures holding objects forming peculiar *mudrā* are found in many places in Assam.[9]

The Assam State Museum houses a few terracotta sculptures. All these pieces were collected from Bhīṣmaknagar near Sadiya and given as a gift to the museum some years back by Jai Ram Das Daulatram, the then governor of Assam. The first piece of terracotta shows a male figure in standing posture keeping the legs apart. It appears, that it tries to keep the grip of its left hand on the waist. The right hand of the figure do not hold anything. The face of the figure is mutilated. The second terracotta piece shows a male human figure in walking attitude. Both the hands of the figure are hold upward. The objects, held in the hands, are not elear. The well dressed figure's head is shaven (?). The third sculptures possibly represents a warrior. Here a male human figure is seen, holding a shield and a sowrd ? The face of the figure is mutilated. The fourth also represents a soldier, holding a shield and a sword (?). On the head of the soldier is seen a conical cap. The figure is in a running posture. The fifth terracotta piece is sadly mutilated. It shows a male and a female figure standing apart. The head of the male figure is missing. To the left of the male figure stands erect a female figure. This figure is raising her right arm towards her male counterpart, while the left hand hangs down. Any way, they are not in the amorous posture. The face of the female figure is crudely represented. The most interesting scene is depicted in the last terracotta plaque. Here a rowing scene is depicted nicely. A female figure is seen standing on a boat, while, a male figure is seen on the rear of the boat and rowing it with an oar. Rowing scene depicted in sculpture is extremely rare in Assam. This is the only piece of sculpture, where we find the representation of a rowing scene for the first time.

T. Bloch[10] has published a few photograhs of sculptures discovered in Kuṇḍilnagar (Śadiyā). In his list of the discovered terracotta plaques, he has included fourteen pieces. B.K. Barua[11] has reproduced all the plaques of the list of Bloch. Here we propose to describe only No. 2 of his list. The rest of the plaques will be described in the following few pages under different subheads. The No. 2 plaque represents a soldier. A beardless man, with a conical cap on his head, holding a spear in his right hand and with a dagger fastened on his right girdles, is shown in a running posture in this plaque. This piece of terracotta sculpture can very well be compared with the one (fourth) from Bhismaknagar, representing a soldier described above. Lining methods of both the figures are also same.

The terracotta sculptures from Bhismaknagar and Kuṇḍilnagar, in the easternmost part of the country it is proved, were produced by the artists in one and the same method. The figures of the plaques are shown in low relief and the alignments are shown carved with the help of a pointed object. The plaques always bear simple square alignment marked with the pointed object. The pin alignment method is not very common. The figure of the beardless soldier from kuṇḍilnagar and the fourth plaques from Bhismaknagar, depicting each a soldier almost in the same style, appear to have borne Mongoloid physiognomy. It is highly possible that these are the work done during the regime of the chutiās, who ruled in this region about A.D. 13th century.[12]

Now it is quite clear that there is a stylistic difference between the Daparvatiā and Kuṇḍilnagar or Bhismaknagar terracotta figurines, yet their general characteristic features lead us to fix their dates somewhere in 6th century A.D., as Dasgupta thinks.[13] He seems to be right in ascertaining the antiquity of the Daparvatiā terracotta plaque, but, it seems that he is not correct in assigning the date of the plaques from Kuṇḍilnagar. From the stylistic point of view it should be placed in the late pre-Āhom period.

If we compare the modelling of the Daparvatiā terracotta male figurine with that of the Kuṇḍilnagar terracotta figurine, we can easily find out the dissimilarity. In the Daparvatiā example there is characteristically a dynamic element in modelling. Further, the dress, worn by the Kuṇḍilnagar figurine, is totally different from that worn by the Daparvatiā example. The ethnic element is quite prominent in the dress, worn by the Kuṇḍilnagar figurine.

A beautiful terracotta plaque, collected from Kukurmutā, Guwahati, has been preserved in the Assam State Museum. The sculpture is in high relief (Fig. 61). In the first plaque three female standing figures are shown in *tribhaṅga* posture. The middle one is taller than the other two figures, who are supposed to be accessory figures. All the three figures have two hands each and wear the usual ornaments and dress. The lower drapery is a long sārī in each case. The hands of the middle figures seem to be busy in fixing the hair-knot. They have high breasts. All the figures seem to be cylindrical in body shape. Above the heads of the figures on the edge of the plaque a row of lotus petal is shown. Similar design is seen in the lower edge of the plaque also. Specially, the middle figure commands a fair feminine beauty and with confidence it can be said that of all the pieces of terrcotta sculptures, so far found in Assam, this piece of sculpture seems to be the best. This sculpture may on stylistic consideration, date to A.D. 10th-11th century. It is difficult to say, if this piece of sculpture represents some goddess or an aristocratic lady with attendants.

Two terracotta plaques from Yogījān are in the Assam State Museum. In the first case a male human figure is shown, in half-kneeling posture with folded hands, as if, praying to somebody in the *añjalihasta* pose and the *ālīḍhā* attitude. The figure bears a quiver with arrows on his back. The bow is shown behind the figure.

The next plaque bears the figures of two human figures. Both the figures seem to be there of male. One figure is seated crosslegged keeping both the hands over the knees. The other figure stands to the left of the former and seems to touch his (former figure's) head gear. The figures of these two plaques from the place bears the characteristic traits of the pre-Āhom sculpture. They might have been stuck into the wall of the ruined brick temples at the site.

At Kenduguri, just near Yogījān, three similar terracotta plaques are noticed. They are weathered. The first plaque bears human figurine, the second plaque depicts a banana tree, while the third plaque represents a bird.

Along with the terracotta sculptures representing, Manasā, kārtikeya, Gaṇeśa, *etc.* which have already been described in the iconography chapter, a few more terracotta figurines weres discovered in Bhātbārī region, now being preserved in the Assam State Museum. One plaque (26 cm×27 cm) shows a male human figure of which lower portions of the legs are broken. The figure is seen bending its left leg, while standing, and leaning the head backward. The right hand of the figure appears to hold something like a thread near the right thigh, while the left hand is seen holding something on the right thigh. On the head of the figures is seen a *karaṇḍa mukuṭa* (?). The body of the figure is slim. Above the head of the figure *chaitya* design and further above an *āmalaka* are noticed, as we have already seen in the cases of Manasā and Kartikeya images from the same locality. Most probably, the present terracotta figurine represenls some unidentified divinity. The plaque is slightly mutilated.[14]

The next broken plaque (25 cm×24 cm) shows a mutilated female figure. The head of the figure is missing. Possibly it was an attendant of some divinity. Another plaque (13 cm long) shows a similar female figure of which the left breast, leg and upper part of the head are mutilated. The end of the right hand of the figure is broken. The raised left hand on its palm possibly holds a pot. The face of the figurine is slightly unshaped due to backing effect. The figure is slightly bulky. The fourth plaque (11 cm long) retains the lower portion of some figure. The upper part of it is missing. Looking at the beautiful thigh and hip, one can assume that it represents a female attending figure. In addition to these mutilated figurines, there are a few fragments of terracotta sculpture from the same place which do not deserve attention here. Stylistically this group of terracotta figurines should date to A.D. 11th-12th century, if not slightly earlier.[15]

At Mornoi[16] a few terrocotta sculptures were found. Now they are in the Assam State Museum. The first terracotta plaque which is half-broken shows a seated female figure. The figure is depicted in profile. The hands of the figure seem to hold nothing. The face of it is mutilated. The second plaque, also mutilated, depicts two male figures seated very close, one behind the other. They probably carry a quiver and a bow, each on their shoulders. Both of them are in mutilated condition. Stylistically, they may be dated to a period slightly later than that of the Pāhārpur terracotta sculptures. The other three broken pieces bear some geometrical designs.

Dasgupta says that of the seven schools of Indian terracotta figurines, the first school, *i.e.* the Assam school, is represented by the Kuṇḍilnagar specimens and the fifth school, *i.e.* the Eastern Indian Mediaeval school, is represented by the specimens discovered at Daparvatiā, Sabhar, Raghurāmpur, Bangarh, Pāhārpur and Nalanda.[17] The terracotta sculptures from Bhāitbārī, Kukurmutā and Marvoi should also find a place in the fifth school, it may be added.

It the Assam State Museum, a stone slab depicting a male human figure with good physique is noticed. The figure is standing in a wrestling pose. It has a beard and a round head. The muscles of the legs and hands are nicely depicted. But interestingly there is no second wrestler to challenge him. In front of the figure, it appeares, a lion or a bull was there which is broken and only the hind portion of it are seen. Human figures carved on stone blocks are found in many ruins—some of them are in bad condition and some of them are mutilated.

A few years back the Assam State Museum authority collected a broken sculpture from Mikirāti (Fig. 18). It is a female bust. Had this piece been not sadly mutilated, it would have been surely a master piece of the art of the Brahmaputra valley. Looking at the style of the execution of this piece of art which must have either some goddess or ordinary woman, one is very much inclined to say that it has stylistic relation with the Daparvatiā Gaṅgā and Yamunā in so far as the modelling is concerned. As far as the modelling of the hāra of the figure is concerned, it offers striking similarity with those of Daparvatiā figures. Therefore, we would like to date this piece of sculpture to *c.* A.D. 6th century.

Another female (?) bust has recently been discovered at Śri-Sūryapāhār which is now being preserved. Here the *hāra* worn by the figure is very nicely shown. Had it not been sadly broken, it would have been a good example of *c.* A.D. 11th century art carved on basalt (Fig. 63).

The remaining portion of our discussion on human figures, for our convenience is divided into following sub-categories :

- *a.* Dancing
- *b.* Amorous figures
- *c.* Scenes from the epics
- *d.* Scenes of the contemporary life

(*a*) *Dancing Figures* : Dancing figures are representations of some of the poses described in the *Nātya Śāstras*.[18] The earliest dancing scene in Assam is noticed in the *dvārasākhā* of the ruined temple at Daparvātiā dated to A.D. 6th century. Here on the left *śākhā* a miniature female figure holding a *vīṇā* and above it a miniature male figure (*gaṅa* ?) is seen in dancing pose. We have come across some stone slabs containing many dancing figures. These slabs are seen lying scattered in many ruined temples. They must have been fitted into the *bhiṭṭis* of the temples for decoration. A long slab is seen bearing beautiful dancing scene at Cole Park, Tezpur. The whole scene is divided into some parts by some *laghu-stambhas*. Each part contains a male or a female figure, two male or two female figures. Beginning from the right we find a male fighting with a lion ; another playing on a flute and a female dancing by his side ; one male playing on a flute ; another on a *dundubhi* ; a male playing on cymbals and a female dancing ; a male playing on a *viṇā* and another female dancing to his right and yet another part showing a male playing on *dundubhi* and another dancing to his left. The whole composition seems to be full of action and is represented with success. Stylistically, this piece of sculpture should be placed to c. A.D. 9th century. This scene can be compared with the one illustrated by Kramrich[19] from Khajurāho. As in our sculputure, here also in the scene both males and females are depicted. Here some of the figures play on drum and cymbals as in our sculpture. But the minor difference is that the whole sculpture is not divided by some *laghustaṁbhas* which we see in our sculpture. Again the dancing scene brought for comparison depicts an elephant, which is not seen in ours. On the whole, it can be rightly said that sculptors took sufficient care to make both the scenes lively.

In the ruins of Bāmuni hill many faces of the square potikās (bracket) bear oblong panels with vase relief. One of them bears the figure of a male and of a female dancing side by side.[20] In the Singri ruins, some figures of waiting maids, damsels in dancing pose and the like are noticed.[21] At Baḍgaṅgā one *dvāra-śilālī* with lion and the vase motif in the centre and having on its two sides two sets of four human figures—two dancing in the centre, one playing on the drum and the other on the cymbal.[22] A similar *śilālī* is preserved in the Assam State Museum, as mentioned already. It is from Hāhcharā, Sibsagar. The *Śilālī* is purposefully made into two pieces bcause of its large size. Two running lions are shown on both the parts of the *śiiālī* and two dancing scenes are depicted in the usual way—the dancing female figure in the middle *khaṭṭaka*, to the right of their figure a female figure beating on a kettle-drum and to the left a bearded male figure beating a on bigger drum. Another *dvāra-śilālī* is seen in the same museum depicting the same theme. At Kāmākhyā, in a small shrine to the North-East of the main temple a similar *śilālī* is noticed. At Cole Park, Tezpur, a similar architectural piece is preserved. Here a little difference is that the dancing female figure is sculptured along with a male, beating on a drum in the same *khaṭṭaka* being attended by two female figures on both sides in separate *khaṭṭakas*. This *dvara-śilālī* seem to belong, stylistically, to A.D. 9th-10th century.

The Assam State Museum houses a beautiful dancing scene It is carved on a octagonal *stambha* of stone. It depicts, in the altermate four human figures,—two male and two female,—playing on instrutments and dancing. The first figure is a female figure shown in dancing pose which is followed by a male one playing on the flute. This figure is followed in turn by a female figure playing on *viṇā*. The last figure is represented by a male one playing on a cattle drum. This type of dancing scenes in sculpture are not commonly met with. It appears to be one of the most interesting dancing scene depicted on a sculpture of Assam belonging to the mediaeval period.

The ruined temple at Deoparvat yields a *rupapaṭṭikā* of which two panels show an ascetic dancing with *śūla* and *dhakka* in his hands, and a *kamaṇḍalu* hanging from his right arm and a female (?) dancing figure.

The Assam State Museum houses an interesting scene of dance depicted in a slightly mutilated terracotta plaque from Kukurmutā. Here one sees a male figure playing on the usual drum, a female figure dancing and a male sitting and coaching the dancer. The player of drum is standing. The male figure is mutilated. However, it can be safely concluded that it represents the *guru* or the choreographic master, imparting lessons to the girl who is dancing in his front. The hands of the figure are in *vākhyāyana-mudrā* and seated in the typical posture of a *guru* on a *bhadrāsana*. Stylistically, this sculpture may be placed to A.D. 10-11th century. Dance-coaching scene in sculpture is really very rare. Even now this type of dance-coaching and practice is in vogue in Assam.

Three terracotta plaques bearing dancing figurines are found at Kuṇḍilnagar.[23] The first plaque bears a human couple. Both of these figures are seen in the dancing posture. Their legs are bent. Their left hands are seen resting on the hip and holding each a stick. The right hands of both the figures are uplifted and hold something, probably a *damaru*. Their ears are perforated, and eyes and mouths are wide open. They have snub noses. Their hair style is arranged in ending in spirals. Both the figures on their lower parts wear each a designed short drapery. In between the left arm and the body in both the cases, is shown something indistinct. Stylistically, this piece of sculpture is different from the other one from the same place described above. The present piece of sculpture seems to have some characteristic traits of the terracotta sculpture from Pāhārpur. But our sculpture seems to be of a later period than the Pāhārpur sculptures.

The second plaque shows a lone male bearded human figure in dancing attitude. The right hand of the figure is uplifted, while the left hand is made to rest on its hip. The head of the dancer almost resembles those of the pair of dancers described above. Both the legs are bent outwards in the dancing pose. The plaque is sadly mutilated. The third terracotta plaque represents another dancer. Here the dancer is seen raising his left leg. The left hand of the figure holds something above his head, while the right one holds a stick or a banner. The nose of the figure is pointed and the eye (the visible one) is wide open. The dancer is well draped with designed garments.

The third plaque shows another dancing human figure. Here the right hand of the figure is shown as lifted up, while the left hand is made to rest on its hip. The head of the figure resembles those of the pair of dancers of the first plaque. Both the legs of the figure are bent outwards in dancing posture. From the stylistic consideration, these plaques can be taken as older than the other terracotta plaques published by Bloch and Barua.

In addition to the composite images of the dancing figure, independent dancing human figures shown separately, are also met with in Assam. A sculpture with a male figure from Kāmākhyā is executed with "geometrical precision", gracefully portraying the curve of the body. The head is inclined towards the right shoulder, the left hand is moved round the head, so as to touch the fingers of the right hand, the arm of which is stretched upward in a straight line. "In spite of the mutilated face, the figure seems to be remarkable for the elegance of pose."[24]

In the Deoparvat ruins a more interesting and complicated dancing figure is noticed. Here is shown a *śikhara* of foliage with *āmalaka* and *padmakośa* filial, flanked by a figure of a male and that of a female, both dancing with their legs resting on elephants in turn supported by *padmas*. Both the male and female figures have four hands each carrying dhanu, *bāṇa*, *akshamālā* and *khaḍga* or a *daṇḍa*. They wear *patrakuṇḍalas* and *kirīṭamukuṭas*. This kind of sculpture is rare.[25]

In the Assam State Museum is seen a block of stone carrying a lone female figure, bending its legs outward and leaning its head. In the group of terracotta sculptures from Bhāitbārī, now in the Assam State Museum, a plaque is noticed showing a male figure, bending its legs outward and playing on a *mṛdaṅga*. The upper part of the figure is broken and missing.[26]

Another dancing scene is noticed on a *dvāraśākhā* kept in the campus of the residence of the Deputy commissioner, Tezpur. Here a female dancer, a male drummer and another female dancer are shown separately. A *staṁbha* lying at same place also carries the scene of a music party in separate *khaṭṭakas*. A *dvāra-śilālī* from Bargaṅgā depicts the scene of the usual musical party. A *rupapaṭṭikā* from Deopāhār carries the figure of a horseman, a seated figure of a woman who is singing and another male figure playing on flute,[27] (*b*) *Amorous Figures* : "It appears that the erotic sculptures have the support of the traditional practices of centuries of temple building and have been enjoined by the sacred texts such as the *Kāma-sūtra*."[28] *The Agnipurāṇa* enjoins that the *dvāra* of a temple should be decorated with *mithunas*.[29]

The Assam State Museum, houses five stone blocks, showing some erotic scenes. The first block bears two scenes. The right side of the block carries a male and a female human figures in the sitting posture. The male is seated, stretching both the legs forward horizontally on the seat. The female is seated (in *utkaṭikāsana*) (?) on the lap of the male, facing the same direction as does. Both the hands of the male are placed on the bosom of the female. Both of them are depicted in embracing, kissing and copulating posture. This type of embrace may be identified with *Kshiranira*, described by Vātsyāyana in his *Kāmasūtra*.[30] The kiss, enjoyed by the couple, should be called 'tongue kiss'[31] and the amorous posture in which the figures of the lovers are united, may be identified with the seventh variety—*Samāpti*—the culminating point for both parties.[32] Though the legs and the face of the male figure are mutilated, yet the sculpture depicts a beautiful scene of love of a young couple. The scene is almost in profile and shown in relief.

The next sculpture (Fig. 37) on the same block of stone shows a male figure seated cross-legged and on the lap of the figure sits a female. They are seated facing each other. The female is keeping her legs apart. The legs rise over the hands of the male who with his both hands pushes the hips of his lover towards his body so as to have a perfect copulation. The hands of the female go around the neck of the male in an embrace. Both the figures are seen kissing. The face of the female is looking a little down to receive the loving kiss from his beloved. The embrace in which the couple is represented may be called *Kshiranira*,[33] the kiss in which their lips are blended together may be called 'tongue kiss'[34] and the union of the couple may be identified a *samāpti*, the culminating point for both parties, described by Vātsyāyana.[35]

The next slab of stone shows a male and a female figure in a standing posture. This erotic scene is different from the scenes described already, The male figure is shown with a beard. Both the figures wear each a short *mukuṭa* (?). Probably the *mukuṭa*, worn by the male figure, is *jaṭāmukuṭa*. This figure also wears an *ūpavita*. Here the female is shown on the left, standing quietly. The male is seen trying to bring her closer to him. He places his right hand on the bosom of his lover while embracing her. The left hand seems to hold his erected *liṅga*. Here the female is seen feeling a little shy or ashamed, while the male is seen taking initiative. The style of embrace of this pair, in all probability may be called *sprishṭaka*, described by Vātsyāyana.

The fifth scene is depicted in another slab of stone. This slab, in all, bears six different scenes. In this secne a female is shown leaning on a piece of flat wood (?) placing both the legs on both sides of the male who is kneeling down. Both the figures are facing each other. The male is touching the right leg of the female with his left hand, while his right hand embraces her neck. The female places her left hand on the shoulder of her lover and keeps her right hand on the flat wood for support. Here it seems, the preparation for an union is shown. Both the figures are in profile. The embrace of the couple may be called *piditaka* described by Vātsyāyana. This scene is carved in a shallow *khaṭṭaka* which is flanked by another two *khaṭṭakas* on both the sides. The *khaṭṭaka* to the right depicts a squatting male figure. The figure is shown holding the erected *liṅga* with both the hands. This type of scene is very rare in sculpture.

On the other side of the slab again we get three small *khaṭṭakas*. In the middle one a couple is shown in erotic posture. The female is shown sitting and at the same time stretching her legs forward. The male is kneeling putting his knees out/side the legs of his partner who is holding the *liṅga* of the male with one hand while embracing him with the other. The right hand of the male is holding the left leg of the female, while with the other hand he is embracing her. The head of the male is mutilated. Both the figures are depicted in profile. Vatsyayana seems not to have spoken of such type of pose in embrace. However, in *sūtra*[36] it has been mentioned that if there are other kinds of embraces not described in the work, "they should certainly be made use of for greater enjoyment with due regard to their utility."[37] To the left of this scene in another *khaṭṭaka* a dancing female figure is represented. To the right in the other *khaṭṭaka* is shown a male figure, seated almost in *mahārāja-līlāsana* holding his *liṅga* with his right hand and with the left hand supporting the head which is leaning. The figure seems to have full of sexual desire but greatly disappointed in the absence of a female and hence busy in masturbating. In all, the stone slab, as stated above carries six scenes—three masturbating, one dancing and two copulating scenes. All the sculptures of this slab is smaller in size than the other erotic sculptures described above.

Another slab shows two erotic scenes. The first represents a female human figure engaged in sexual union with a bull. The female human figure is shown kneeling. The left hand of the figure carries the weight of its body. The figure of the bull is shown jumping over her from her backside. The figure raises its tail and seems to be full of passion. This type of union or bestiality is found sculptured also in some other sites of erotic sculpture in India.

There is another scene in the slab. In between both the scene there is a small *laghustambha*. The scene shows a female and a male human figure on a bench. The male is kneeling and stretching the legs of the female who is made to lie down. The elbow of the left hand of the female rests on the bench and the hand supports the head and body of the figure. The male is seen holding her right hand up with his left hand. It is not clear if this posture can be called *Vījrimbhitaka* of *Kāmasūtra*.[38]

The last slab of stone bearing amorous sculptures shows two scenes. The first of these two sculpture is exactly similar to the erotic scene described at the outset, As in that sculpture here also the female is made to sit on the lap of the male. Both the figures are in some type of embrace and kiss. The only difference of minor type is that here the figures sit facing to the left side of the slab in profile, whereas the figures of the first sculpture is slightly mutilated. But the present sculpture is in the perfect state of preservation.

The last scene which is carved in the same block of stone shows an interesting scene. Like the other scenes this is shown in profile. The male is shown sitting and raising his right leg up to the shoulder of the female who with her right hand holds the feet of the leg behind her head. The female is sitting in the same way and raising her leg up to the shoulder level where the feet is caught by the left land of the male behind his head. In this way the right thigh of the male crosess over the left thigh of the female making a tight contact. The right hand of the male and the left hand of his lover are placed on the ground so as to carry the weight of the upper parts of their own bodies. The other leg of both the figures are not depicted here. Though both the figures are not trying to kiss each other yet the embrace in which they are bound to-gether is of special attraction. The style of embrace of the couple may be called *kshīranīra*.[39] The copulating posture may be called *samāpti*.[40]

All the erotic sculpture of our discussion are of peculiar nature. Most of these sculpture do not offer any similarity with the sculpture from Khajurāho, Ellora, Konārk and other places of India. The first, second, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh scenes are strikingly peculiar. However, they are carved out beautifully. In these scenes most of the figures are depicted in sexual union at the culminating point of their urge. This type of erotic sculpture is not commonly met with outside Assam. Even some of the posture of the figures depicted in these scenes do not tally fully with postures of embrace, kiss and union defined by the great saint Vātsyāyana. The scene representing the union of a bull and a human female figure is another interesting piece. Though this type of sculpture is not wanting, yet the lively sculptnre like ours is not commonly met with.

The most important phenomenon of the erotic sculptures of our collection, is that it includes three masturbating scenes, two human male figures and a female human figure in masturbation. Nowhere in India as far as our knowledge goes, human figure is shown engaged in masturbation in the old sculpture. This is for the first time, perhaps, noticed in the sculpture in Assam.

Madankamdev parvat ruins have yielded a few erotic sculptures. A slab bears two such sculptures. The first represents a female and a male in copulating posture. Here the female is almost lying on the ground upwards placing her hands on the ground to support the upper part of the body. She raises her legs on either side of the male, who is almost in squatting and embracing the postrate partner. It seems, the couple is in *Vijrimbhitaka* posture according to the *Kamasūtra*.[41]

The other scene shows a male sitting above the ground level on something keeping his legs on the ground before him, *i.e.* sitting in a normal way. A female is shown squatting in his front and with both of her hands holding the *liṅga* of her partner. This type of erotic scene is really very rare.

Another slab which bears some sculptures shows an interesting amorous scene between a man and an animal. Here a four-footed animal probably a she-goat is shown standing and turning its head backward. From the backside of it, is shown a man almost mounting on it for sexual union. The man while doing so is kissing the animal on its mouth. This type of bestiality is very rare.

In addition to these erotic sculptures, a few loose sculptures are noticed here and there. Nath has reported an embracing pair of *mithuna* on a slab of stone at Changchowkī.[42] Kataki says that some figures in a crude form, illustrating amorous scenes, are lying in a very ruined state at Singri, two of which are removed to the *Kāmarūpa Anusandhān Samiti.*[43] A few pieces of erotic sculptures are noticed lying outside the Gupteśvar temple, Siṅgri. On the northern *prākāra* wall of the Hayagṛva Mādhava temple at Hājo a few erotic scenes are seen on stone slabs. At Kāmākhyā a small piece of stone bearing an erotic scene, half hidden in the earth is noticed in small way leading to some residences of *pāṇḍās* (priests). In front of the *nāmghar* (modern temple) at khārghuli across the rail line a stone piece bears a couple in standing postures. In the ruins of Deoparvat a slab bears a couple. Both are seated on the ground and touching each other's hands. But their bodies are not close.[44]

At Deulgovinda, North Guwahati, a few *mithuna* figures are noticed sculptured on two *potikās*. The first occur *potikā* is bigger than the other. It has two prongs and on them two *mithuna* pairs. Both the pairs are alike. In both the cases the figures are made to stand. The female who is well-dressed and ornamented stands to the left of the male and places her right hand on the back of the male in an embracing style. The male who is equally well dressed places his left hand on the soulders of his lover. The *valaya* worn on the left hand by the female in both the cases are worthy of notice. The left hand of the female and the right hand of the male are made to simply hang down. The other *poticā* has four prongs each of which bears the sculpture of a pairs of *mithuna* in standing posture. Though these figures are smaller in size, yet they offer good deal of similarity to those of the first *potikā*. A few figures of the couples of the second *potikā* are mutilated. All these sculptures, occurring in architectural parts of a ruined temple, seem to belong on stylistic ground, to A.D. 9th-10th century. Though these couples are found on the *potikās* which is an upper architectural part of a temple, yet we can not possibly take them as the couple of a Gandharva and an Apsarā. These figures do not offer any resemblance to the figures of Gandharva from Guwahati, and the figures of the Apsarā from Numalīgarh, now in the Assam State Museum.

Pingalesvar ruins have yielded quite a few erotic scene. They are more or less similar to the erotic sculptures described above. But they are small in size.

An old slab of stone, small in size, bearing two scenes, is seen stuck into the basement of a modern house near Deulgovinda. Here one scene shows a male human figure applying force on a female figure to bring it closer. Probably it is a case of raping. All these sculptures, on stylistic ground, may be placed in *c.* A.D. 9th century if not earlier.

The postures of the erotic sculptures from Assam, it is clear from our discussion, are not very common.[45] In most of the scenes the figures are in copulating posture in *samāpti* form *i.e.* culminating point for both the parties and not in an ordinary love playing posture. The scenes of masturbation are again very uncommon. Likewise, the scenes of bestiality (union between man and animal), though found in places outside Assam, seem to be slightly peculiar in that the figure of men and animals are shown in the culminating point of their sexual desire. In some of the erotic sculptures in the Assam State Museum and at Madan Kāmdev parvat, we see that the male figures are made to have each a hair-coiffure on the back of their heads just like their female counterparts. But this does not mean that they are female figures simply because they are sometimese shown with erected lingas and shown without breast and on the other hand their counterparts are shown with high bossom. On stylistic consideration, all these sculptures may be placed in A.D. 9th century if not in A.D. 19th century. But we have not come acroses any erotic sculpture, belonging to a period other than at least A.D. 10th century in Assam.

(*c*) *Scenes from Epic* : Scenes from the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* are also depicted in the sculpture from Assam. But they are quite few in number. They are found in the temple ruins at Deoparvat. A *rūpapattikā* from this place, having five panels shows *Rāma* and Lakṣmaṇa seated, the latter behind the former, while Sugrīva is seen kneeling before Rāma in supplication (in *añjalihasta* pose), and Hanumān and other monkies are seen watching them with reverence.[46] The incident of Hanumān's success in getting the friendship of Rāma for the protection of Sugrīva, is vividly portrayed here. Another *rūpapaṭṭikā*, found in the same ruin, represents a well-known scene from the *Mahābhārata*. Here the extermination of Garuḍa's pride is vividly pictured. In this scene Garuḍa is shown advancing in a threatening attitude towards an emaciated figure of an ascetic who is seated with his hands raised above his head in supplication. Both the figures wear perforated *patra-kuṇḍalas*. Both the sides appear to illustrate the *Garuḍa-Garvabhaṅga* or the outdoing of Garuḍa's pride in the *Mahābhārata*.[47] In another scene chiselled in a block of stone in the ruins of the same place is seen a male tenheaded human figure pulling the female figure with force and tearing the beak of a bird in his front. Probably here the ten-headed male figure represents *Rāvaṇa*, while the female figure is that of Sitā. The figure of the bird may be Jaṭāyu, Therefore, it seems that the scene represents the *Sitā-haraṇa* and the fight of *Rāvaṇa* with Jaṭāyu episode of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Another scene carries a "royal archer shooting a deer couple, when in coition. This represents the *Mahābhārata* story of Pāṇḍu, the father of the Pāṇḍavas, who was cursed to die with his sexual desire ungratified as a result of his having shot a deer couple (really a sage and his wife in the guise of a deer) in coition."[48]

(*d*) *Scenes from Contemporary Life* : The study of the scenes of the contemporary life of the people is the most important factor. A careful study of the various scenes from the life represented in the sculptures give us information about the social and domestic activities of the people of the period to which the sculptured scenes belong. But the diversities of these scenes depicting the social life are so numerous that it is not possible here to bring them together and discuss them in full here. In fact, one can make an extensive study on these numerous scenes found sculptured on stone, lying scattered in Assam. Here we shall discuss some of the leading sculptures depicting domestic scenes only.

Some beautiful sculptures of our purpose are noticed at *Kāmākhyā*. To the right of the western *toraṇa* on a *prākāra*, two sculptures are noticed. Both of them are sculptured separately in two slabs of stone and fitted into the *prākāra* of late construction. The first depicts a scenes of worship. Here a house-holder is seen doing his daily worship. He is seated in *utkatikāsana* and doing *japa*.

The second slab contains a beautiful scene of mother and child. Here the female figure (mother) is seated putting her left leg vertically, and right leg horizontally on the seat and accommodating the child on the lap. The child is seen sucking the right breast of the female who leans her head on the right shoulder out of affection for the child and her own satisfaction. The child rises his legs up out of joy. The female figure holds the child with both the hands. The sculptor took sufficient care to make the scene lively. Indeed, such realistic sculpture of mother and child is very rare and so far, we have not come across any other sculpture of mother and child outside Assam which can be compared well with the present one.

To the left of the *toraṇa* on the *prākāra* another two sculptures are seen. Like the above two sculptures these also belong to an early period and now they are fitted into the *prākāra* renovated in the Koch period. The first is sculptured in a stone slab, rectangular in size. Here a woman worshipper is depicted. She kneel and pours water from a pot into the mouth of an animal (?). She wears a long cloth on the upper part of her body. The other slab contains a male figure who is seen blowing a *śaṅkha* putting the same on the mouth and holding it with both the hands. All these sculptures are of rare types and and they bear singular characteristic feature. All these sculptures, excepting the one bearing the figures of mother and child, are of a religious character. The physignomy, dress, etc. of figures do not have any resemblance with the sculptural figures that are commonly met with. A *rūpapaṭṭikā* from Deoparvat, consisting of three panels, shows a peculiar scene. Here we see "a woman in her toilet, a man dragging a fallen woman from a scene where another is about to thrash her, while a second woman is dissuading him, and a man advancing with a raised staff.[49] The inner meaning of his sculpture is not quite clear. However, it can be inferred that the scene depicts a quarrel among the villagers.

Another *rūpapaṭṭikā* from the place, which is divided into four panels, contains the following scenes: from the left to right: (i) Yōgī (ascetic) pushing a goat before him,[50] (ii) another Yōgī is seen dancing which has already been described under the dancing sculpture, (iii) a dancing male figure, described already and (iv) 'a seated women in an ecastatic mood'.[51] 'Another piece of stone eontains the illustration of a combat between two warriors. The actual combat is shown in one panel, while in the other, one of the warriors. is shown marching off in triumph and carrying the severed head of the other in his hands, the headless trunk staggering behind.[52] There are some more scenes protrayed in the stone sculptures of the same ruins. They are a horseman, a seated woman, another playing on a flute, a conch blower, a man protecting his family, seated on a elephant's back against a man attacking, and also worsippers in different poses.[53] The facial type of the men and women are undoubtedly local.

At Tārabasā a figure of weight carrier on a piece of *stambha* of soft sand stone 36 cm×26 cm×26 cm. is noticed. The man is shown carrying a loaded basket on his head, and while just rising up from the ground with such a heavy weight, his legs become bent and wide apart. But he gathers strength by pressing his right hand on his right knee cap. On another face of the same block is shown a figure of a female, 26 cm in hight, carying a pot in its left hand and a stick in the right hand.[54] At Tetelipukhure, mikir hills, a *dvārasirapaṭṭi* bears an image of Gaṇeśa on a lower level. In the second panel in the lower level is seen a figure of an old man with conically shaved beard, with folded dands. To the left of this figure is seen a figure of a man with bow on his left shoulder, but with folded hands and the third figure on the right is a servant carrying an umbrella above the bearded man. This scene perhaps represents a king with his body-guard and the umbrella-carrier.[55] A *rūpapaṭṭikā*, bearing some domestic (?) scenes, is noticed in the compound of the residence of the Deputy Commisioner, Tezpur. The lower portion of a *dvārasākhā* of a temple, now displayed in the Assam State Museum, shows a female figure with a basket on head and some monkeys, trying to catch the basket. Such type of sculptures depicting secular theme are found all over the Brahmaputra vally, though not in great number.

2. ANIMAL FIGURES : Sculptures of animal forms include representation of real animals as well as composite, mythical figures *i.e.* Makaras, Kīrttimukhas and so forth.

Elephants are very common in the art of old Assam. They were carved out by the artists with great skill. The elephant's head was used as the royal insignia in Assam. Every copper plate incription of the kings of Kārmarūpa bears the head of an elephant.[56] A row of elephants (*gajathara*) is often seen as the moulding of the *adhishthāna* of some renovated temples in the later period.

On a moulding in the Hayagrīva Mādhava temple at Hāzo, roughly 61 cm above the *adhishthāna* a row of caparisioned elephants, *i.e. gajathara* motif encircles the *bīmāna* and supports the edifice. Here the trunks, tusks and the forelegs of the elephants are nicely shown. The *gajaratha* motif of the Kailāsa temple at Ellorā[57] can easily be compared with ours. The *gajathara* of our temple is older than the present temple built in A.D. 16th century and stylistically, they may be easily placed in *c.* A.D., 9th century. Similar *gajathara* motif is noticed at Deoparvat from where two broken pieces were brought to the Assam State Museum. At the place figures of elephants in profile, where each pair has only a single head, are also noticed.[58] A temple at Seessee has on its round *adhiṣṭhāna* similar figures of elephant.[59] This type of broken pieces of elephant figures are found in many places in Assam. It is quite clear, the *gajathara* motif was quite commonly employed in the temples of Assam in the pre-Āhom period and that this animal was treated as a sacred animal.

A small elephant, nicely engraved on a small block of stone, is lying at the site of the main temple at Kāwaimāri.[60] A *dvāra-sirapaṭṭi* housed in the Assam State Museum shows two elephants and in the middle a *kumbha* (pitcher). A block of sand-stone shows two figures of two richly decorated elephants marching forward. Each figure measures 28 cm×21 cm. Both the figures are shown with tusks and a cushion on the back and a bell hanging down by the side from a chain.[61]

R. D. Banerji remarks, "The conventional representation of the lion shows that the inhabitants of Assam valley were not very familiar with the kings of beasts."[62] In Bāmunī hill ruins, two large slabs of stone bear the *gajaśārdūla* motif, which seems to have stylistic relation with the Pālā school of Bengal. A similar sculpture is found at Numalīgarh. Stone slabs, bearing lions standing on couchant and vanquished elephants, are seen in the ruins of Nowgaon, Tezpur, Gāchtal, Guwahati and other place.

In the Assam State Museum a few images representing *gajaśārdūla* have been noticed. In this motif the elephant is depicted smaller in size than the standing lion who keeps its rear legs on the back of the elephant and the other two legs along with the body rising up. The *gajaśārdūla* motif is, commonly found on either side of the *silāpaṭṭa* of the icons of gods and goddesses belonging to a period ranging from *c.* A.D. 9th to-12th century in Assam, as in Bengal (Bangladesh and West Bengal State). The *svayam pradhāna* images of *gajaśārdūla* motif dates to *c.* A.D. 9th-10th century, as known from the existing sculptures.

The carving of a pair of lions showing running from each other with their heads bent towards the *maṅgala-kalasa* is commonly met with in old Assamese art as a decorative motif.[63] This type of decorative motifs are found in many ruins of Assam. These carvings are found in *dvāradehalīs* of the temple of the pre-Āhom age. Wherever the temples were renovated in the Āhom or in the Koch period, the older *dvāradehalīs* are reemployed. A broken *dvāra-dehalī* representing the scene of the *maṅgala-ghata* and a retreating lion on either side, is in the Assam State

Museum which was brought from Hahcarā, Sibsagar. In a small shrine near the main temple at Kāmākhyā there is such a piece employed in the proper place. It is also of the pre-Āhom period. Stone slabs bearing the figure of *dvāra-pālikā* of lion standing on hind legs are also alongwith the figure found sometimes. For instance, a slab bearing a figure of *dvāra-pālikā* and a lion are noticed in the residence of Sri R.C. Choudhary of Uzanbazar, Guwahati. Sometimes a standing lion is also found sculptured separately.

As the elephant, the lion was also treated as an important animal in the past and it found places in old icons and art in Assam. The lion is shown as *vāhana* of goddess *Durgā* or Mahishamardinī in images. The elephant is shown normally as the *vāhana* of Indra. However, this animal is shown as the *vāhana* of Manasā in an image of the deity from Śilghāt, now being preserved in the Assam State Museum.

At the *adhiṣṭhāna* of the *Ghaṇṭākarna* temple, which is to the West of the Kāmākhyā temple, some stone fragments of the old period are seen. One of those "is a beautifully carved frieze in which the band represents a series of garlands and the lower scroll work, in which some very spirited representations of animals occur,"[64] as observed by Dikshit. Only four figures of this series, namely, a buffalo, a tiger a lion and a deer are now seen, other being mutilated badly. But the quality of the art, manifested in them, is unsurpassed in Assam.[65] Banerji thinks that these carving may belong to A.D. 7th or 8th century.[66] A terracotta plaque from Kuṇḍilnagar shows a lion standing on the two rear legs the front ones being uplifted.[67]

We have come across many figures of bulls belonging to the mediaeval, now being set up in front of some modern temple of Śiva or preserved in various places in Assam.[68] The figure of the seated bull are generally supposed to be the representation of Nandī, the vehicle of Śiva. They have already been described. An interesting figure of a bull is found in an erotic scene sculptured on a block of stone, preserved in the Assam State Museums. Here the bull is shown in a copulating with a human female figure. The excited bull is graphically pictured. It has already been noticed under erotic sculptures. At Ākāśīgaṅgā, figures of cow and bulls are found sculptured on stone slabs.[69] Figures of horse are found in the image of Surya in Assam, as in other regions. A terracotta plaque from Kuṇḍilnagar shows a horse[70] with the saddle and the bridle. At Deoparvat a slab is seen, bearing the scene of the shooting of a deer couple, when they are in coition, by a royal archer.[71] At Madankāmdev parvat a slab shows scene of sexual union between a she-goat and a man. At Deoparvat, another scene shows an ascetic pushing (?) a goat.[72] All these scenes have already been noticed above. Sculpture representation of monkeys are also noticed. The Assam State Museum houses two sculptures—one from the Mājulī T.E. and the other from Tāmulpur showing a human female with a basket on her head and a monkey, trying to climb up in a bid to hold the basket. The sculpture from Mājulī T.E. is mutilated. A monkey figure, worshipped as Hanumāna, is noticed outside the Śikh temple at Dhubrī. It is brought, undoubtedly from some other place.

In the old Assamese Art birds are also figured as decorative motifs. We have noticed some figures, goose (haṁsa) and peacock (mayūra) in some sculptures. The flying geese on the *dvāraśākhās* of Daparvatiā ruined temple are to be noticed. Their long necks stretched forward, really look nice. They are executed in high order. Independent images of birds are met with in the pre-Āhom terracotta sculpture from Kuṇḍlilnagar. Block[73] has illustrated a few plaques. The first plaque shows a pair of peacocks with their bodies twisted around each other in a loving embrace. The second plaque shows a falcon carrying a heron. The third pieces of which he has mentioned is sadly mutilated. It represents a bird resembling an ornamentation. Another terraecotta plaque from the same place has been illustrated by B.K. Barua. It shows possibly an wolf with its open wings.

Almost the grotesque or mythical figures the *Kirttimukha* (literally, gloried face) is quite common in the old Assamese Art as in the art of other parts of India. First as a sacred symbol, then as a mere artistic device, and later as architectural ornament, this motif occurs througout the whole history of Indian art.[74] The conventional symbol of animal was always welcome to the artists of the decorative art. The artist, therefore, even dealing with animals with real habits they were familiar, did not hestitate to follow the texts and tradition in order that they could make their work look symbolical rather than real. For this reason, symbolical figures very quickly become grotesque or mythical.[75] Among these grotesque or mythical figures *Kīrttimukha* and *praṇāla* are common. In the case of the images of divinities belonging to the mediaeval period, specially to *c.* 10th-12th century, the figure of *Kīrttimukha* is an invariable motif, which is always depicted at the top of the *śilā-paṭṭa*. flanked by two figures of Vidyādhara. The figures *Kīrttimukha* were greatly used in temple decoration in the mediaeval period in Assam. It is proved by the scattered *staṁbha, dvāra-śirapaṭṭis*, and other stone slabs bearing this motif. A round slabs of stone, lying in the campus of the residence of the Deputy Commissioner Darrang, shows four figures of *Kīrttimukha* facing four sides. The style of the depiction of these figures is not common.

An interesting *stambhaśira* at Deoparvat is decorated with huge *kīrttimukhas* or *Vanaspati* or *Kāla-Makara* decorations, as they are known in Java.[76] The four *kīrttimukha* motif bear a strong resemblance to the *Kāla-makaras* of Java. A coping piece at the same place depicts some such designs which are remarkably akin to the Javanese once and provided, like the latter, with eyes having hornlike sockets.[77] In Assam most of the figures of *kīrttimukha*, as rightly said by B.K. Barua, are shown without the lower jaw.[78] As in most of the figures the tongue is shown protruding and the lower jaw becomes invisible. Almost in every temple ruins of this province, this motifs occur in stone slabs.

Snakes are generally represented with the images of Manasā and Śiva and Ananta-śayé Vishṇu in Assam. But surprisingly, the snakes hood is found above a a figure of Indra, preserved in the State Museum. Representation of the snake is also found in architecture. In the *dvāra* of Gāchtal ruined temple coiling snakes are seen all over. At Daparvatiā Majgoan and Devasthān, broken *dvāra* shows *sarpa-śākhās* or *nāgar-śākhas.*

Among the composite animal figures, we find that the representions, of *makara,* whose mouth is that of an alligator or a crocodile (*makara*) who has a tail, resembling that of an animal, *suparṇa,* the mythical deity, half man half bird,[79] and Garuḍa are commonly met with in old Assamese art pieces. Two figures of *suparṇa* are noticed on the *śirapaṭṭi* of the *dvāra* at Daparvatiā. On either side of these figures were seated figures of *aśuamukhi kinnaras* are noticed. Garuḍa is generally found tdepicted in the image of Vishṇu. Independent images of Garuḍa except *lalitabimba* of Daparvatiā *dvāra,* with the representations of *makara* and *kūrma.* (tortoise). *Makara* is generally found as the *vāhana* of *Gaṅga,* while *kūrma* is found as the *vāhana* of Yamunā in their iconographic represention. Their earliest represention in Assam are noticed at Daparvatia. *Pranālas* of the ruined temples in the shape of the face of a *makara* are noticed in many places in Assam. A broken piece of such *praṅāla* is in the Assam State Museum Another piece is noticed at Kāmakhyā. One *praṅāla,* representing a lion's face (?) is noticed outside the Khārghuli modern sanctuary.

3. SCULPTURAL DESIGNS :—It is almost clear that *śastras, i.e.,* the iconographical texts, gave no independence to the sculpture, excepting a little room for materialisting their own dreams of carving some divine or semidivine figures in ancient India. But ornamentation of art and architecture works was entirely left to them for enabling them to show their artistic talents through decorative designs. The decorative designs may be divided into three groups—architectural, geometrical and floral.

So far as architectural designs are concerned, we have already discussed a few item, while describing the objects of architectural importance under a separate heading. Here we shall mention only the main types.

The *candraśālā* motif as on ornament, generally met with in all the monuments of the past, may be called an architectural design. *Candraśālā* of two different types are noticed on the *śirapaṭṭi* of the Daparvatiā temple *dvāra.* One of these patterns is a trefoil in which all the three *bṛttakhaṇḍas* are depicted in the same size, while the other upper *bṛttakhaṅḍa* is larger than two *bṛttakhaṅḍas* on the sides. The *gavāksha* type and the perforated window and the *śikhara* are the common architectural designs of the olden art of this province. The dome, like *stupa,* and pyramidal roof are the other architectural motifs.

In the ruins of Ākāśigaṅgā a *dvāra-śirapaṭṭi* shows some designs of miniature temple.[80] In the Assam State Museum, two slabs of stone bears the design of temples. One of these slabs was found in the Judges' Field, Guwahati. Just outside the western *toraṇa* of the Kāmākhyā temple, some miniature similar *śikharas* are noticed beautifully carved on rock. In the Mājgāon *dvāra-śirapaṭṭi* also such a type of designed occurs. In the absence of any standing pre-Āhom temple in Assam this type of miniature *śikhara* gives us invaluable information retating to architectural activities in those days. A few mutilated terracotta sculputres from Bnāitbari show temple designs over the head of the deities. In these sculpture the *śikhara* is nicely depicted with *āmalaka* Stylistically, they may be placed *c.* A.D. 10th-11th century. At Gosāijuri, a *stambha-śira* is shown with the *gavāksha* design.[81] The fifth and sixth mounds have yielded, respectively, a *dvāra-śākhā*, carved with the *yavanikā* design and a round gneiss place recalling in shape moon-stones of south India and Ceylon.[82] *Kuṇḍrāksha-bātāyan*, *āmalakas*, moulded architraves reminiscent of the Chalukyan style of decoration"—are noticed at Ākāśigaṅga.[83] Miniature of replicas of temple pieces of entablature with projecting petals as ceiling pieces, with full blown lotus designs, cucumber shaped pillars stone with octagonal bases, central belts, the cucumbers arising out of lotus calyx", *etc.*[84] are lying scattered at the same place. In the Deoparvat ruins there is noticed a *viśva-padma* which, without doubt, was the *korataka* of the *garbhagṛha* of the ruined temple. The seed-vessel of this big *padma* bears in relief the figure of a Vidyādhara. A similar type of *Viśva-padma* is noticed in the Siṅgri ruins; but in the seed-vessel the figure of Vidyādhara is marked absent. The *āmalaka ghaṭa* and *praṇāla* are found in every heap of ruins in Assam (Fig. 49). Two types of *āmalakas* are noticed. The first type is quite big in size and, probably for this Masor, these *āmalakas* are always found broken. The other variety of *āmalakas* does not easily break. for it is small in size. Coping Pieces, possibly of *toraṇa* (gateways) are found scattered at Deoparvat. One such piece "is a pyramidal bracket with a bold design of sinuous lines, flanking a central cuspan."[85] Another piece of *potikā* at the same place is "in the shape of the *śikhara* formed by a *kīrttimukha* and foliage issuing from it".[86]

One coping piece brought from Deoparvat to the Assam State Museum, is strikingly similar to the piece representing "pyramidal bracket with a bold design," described above. The last coping piece of our discussion is found at Deoparvat. It is more interesting than the others, described above. It "shows a *śikhara* of foliage with *āmalaka* and lotus bud finial flanked by a god and goddes (?) both dancing with their legs resting on elephants in turn supported by lotuses".[87] Holes on the underside of the piece suggest that it was fixed on to a *toraṅa* beam.[88] At Piṅgaleśvar *rupa-paṭṭīkas* carrying in male and female figures holding *kheṭaka* are noticed. They are sculptured inside cireles they must have been used as decorative figure (Fig. 38). In the Donbosco school campus, Tezpur a slab of stone is noticed. It bears a conventional representation of the caitya gavāksha pattern "so common in the temples of central India, especially those in the Rewa State and Khājurāho."[89] This piece is quite similar to the copying piece from Deoparvat and in the Assam State Museum, described above. Two small *stambhas* "evidently belonging to a balustrade, were found at Numalīgarh, each surmounted by a *bal-pīṭha* shaped like an invented *padma*".[90] In front of the residence of S.P., Kāmrup, on the road side a broken slab which carried some sculpture now broken off show a carving of an *āmakala* in the corner. At Pingaleśvar ghaṭa and āmakala designs are noticed (Fig. 40).

Geometrical designs are mostly ṇoticed on the ceilings of shrines now in ruins, as well as on *staṁbhas*. It occurs in many ways, *i.e.* as circular, semi-circular, triangular and so on. At Deoparvat, Śingri and other places some stone slabs are seen having the decorative designs. At Tezpur also two *staṁbhas* are seen with round carvings. Dalton has shown the technique of this type of decoration, fashioned mainly by carving circles.[91] The copying pieces, found in the ruins of Deoparvat and Tezpur have in the interior sunken panels carvings of geometrical patterns with a half design *phullavali* in the centre.[92] A slightiy different copying piece of geometrical design is seen lying in front of the Khārghuli modern Sanctuary A fevreotta plaque from Kuṅḍilnagar shows a circle, formed by two lines its inside is filled with twisting a rope or cord. Another plaque shows geometrical plus floral patterns.[93]

Floral designs comprise leaf. However, creeper and purely leaf decorations which are commonly met with in the olden Assamese art. Of the floral designs lotus, the favourite one was carved in various way—in bud, in a half-open state and in a fullblown state. Very often we find that the *pīṭhas* and *āsanas* of the deities, depicted in the images are design as all the full-blown state. Even the *Khratakas* of shrines which are in ruins before the carvings of the *viśva-padma*, which is quite big and circular in size. This type of *viśva-padma* is seen in the Deoparvat ruins, Śingri ruins, at Mālinithān and other places. Similar big *padmas*, sculptured independently, are seen at Cole Park, Tezpur. Most of the images of various deities, belonging to A.D. *c*. 10th-12th century have the *padmakośas* design below the *āsana* of the deity. Sometimes, human figures wear *patrakuṇḍalas* of full-blown *padma* style. *Pushpakuṇḍalas* worn by human figures or deities are also noticed. In fact, floral design is an invariable ornament of the early Assamese sculpture and they were sculptured in the way the artist liked.

Beautifully carved creepers and leaves are seen in the *dvāras* of Daparvatiā and Mājgoān and in the slabs of stone at Cole Park, Tezpur, and other places. A splendid florid examples is seen in the trefoil *bṛttakhaṇḍa* on black schist from Tezpur.[94] In addition to the representation of the Kīrttimukha at the top and a *phullavalī* in the centre, it bears several meandering creepers which are well marked for their diversities of style and way of depiction.

At Mikirāti a stray small piece of stone, bearing some foliage carvings, "resembling somewhat Doric impost" has been found.[95] At Matharbārī and Mikirāti stone slabs showing *papma-pīṭha* have been noticed. They were designed to carry some sculptural figures or icons.[96] Massive blocks of stone, bearing various designs, are lying scattered at Jogījān.[97] Flower, creeper with bird and animal insets, and twisted serpent designs occur in one of the *dvāraśākhās* at Gachtal, now remove to Nowgaon park. The designs recall the Pāla parallel of North Bengal.[98] Four big designs, similar to one found at Gosāijur, were dug out from four mounds at Mikirati.

Originally they definitely carried some divinities.[99] In the carvings of *dvara-śākhās* various designs, such as drooping petals encircling creepers with animal and human insets, and strings, are found at Deoparvat.[100] Some beautiful designs, such as floral acanthus with *kīrttimukha* (?) in the centre, and one architrave with simple bead foliage, are lying scattered at Gosāijurī.[101] A piece of stonebearing floral representation, about 62cm in length, found at Numāligarh (?) was brought to the Assam State Museum and is in display now. The piece of sculpture shows a cluster of lotus buds with long stalks and a central lotus in full bloom. The cluster is issuing from a pond. Another sculpture of the same nature was noticed at Numālīgarh.[102]

A few terracotta plaques from Kuṇḍilnagar show decorative floral patterns. The first piece shows a plant with five long pointed leaves. The second—plaque depicts a group of four flowers : (a) the largest is cup-shaped (b) two small flower below and (c) a bud rising over the largest flower. The last one shows "a lotus shaped ornament, with eight petals arranged around a circle in the middle having cluster of nine drops."[103]

REFERENCES

1. Sankalia, H.D., *The Archaeology of Gujarat*, Bombay, 1941, p. 116.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *ARASI.*, 1925-1926, p. 110.
4. *Ibid.*, Pt. LIV.
5. This figure has already been briefly noticed in the Iconography Chapter under *Buddhist Images.* Here in the interest of the sculptural study, it has been again described, as this is the oldest terracotta sculpture found in Assam, so far.
6. *ARASI.*, p. 110.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
8. See *Ibid* , Pls. LII; *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1927-1928, Pl. LVII, C.C., Dasgupta, "Pāhārpur and its Remains", *A.R.A.S.I.*, and *M.A.S.I.*, No. 55, Pls. XXVII-LVIII.
9. *Cf.* The huge *sthānaka* image of Vishṇu at Sukresvar *sthānaka* figures on the way to Kāmākhyā, miniature figures in a *sirapatti* at Devasthan, a miniature similar figure on a sirapatti lying near Barua Book Agency, Jorpukhurī, Guwahati.
10. *ARASI.*, 1906-1907, pp. 27-28, Pl. VIII.
11. *Op. cit.*, Pls. VIII & IX.
12. Barua, K.L., *op. cit.*, p. 179; and B.K., Barua, & H.V.S., Murthy, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
13. Dasgupta, C.C., *Origin and Evolution of Indian Clay Sculpture*, University of Calcutta, 1961, p. 228.
14. Also see Bhuyan, G.N., "Notes on the Terracottas of Bhaitbari, *JARS*, Vol. XX, pp. 8-13.
15. *Ibid.*

16. These pieces of terracottas were collected from the the residence of Sri Debesh Das, Mornoi.
17. Dasgupta, C.C., *op. cit.*, pp. 236-237.
18. Sankalia, H.D., *op. cit.*, p. 121.
19. Kramrich, S., *The Hindu Temple*, 1946, Pl. LXVIII.
20. *ARASI.*, 1925-1926, p. 117.
21. *JARS.*, Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 93.
22. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 41.
23. *ARASI.*, 1906-1907, Pl. VIII, Figs. 1, 3 & 9. Also see B.K., Barua, *op. cit.*, Pl. IX.
24. *ARASI.*, 1936-1937, p. 58.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Bhuyan, G.N., *op. cit.*, pp. 9 ff.
27. Choudhury, N.D., *op. cit.*, p. 189.
28. Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, p. 172. Also see H.D., Sankalia, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
29. Ganguli, O.C., 'The Mithunas in Indian Art', *Rupam*, No. 22 & 23, 1925, pp. 54-56; also No. I, pp. 22-24.
30. Upadhya, S.C., *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana, 1963, p. 102.
31. *Ibid* , This type of kissing is, however, deseribed as *udbhranta cumbana* by S.K., Mukherjee, see his *Kāmasūtra Vātsyāyana*, p. 106.
32. Upadhyaya, S.C., *op. cit.*, p. 98.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 98. Suvarnābha, however, details four varieties of embrace at the time of the union. The union of our figures may be called *stanālingana*, according to him. In the Rati-Rahasya. this pose of copulation is called *vimarditam*. See, R., Schmdt, *Rati-Rahasya* by Kokkoka, p. 97.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 103. The posture of congress to be performed, probably is *Vijrimbhitaka*, see *Ibid.*, p. 116.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
42. *JARS.*, Vol. V, Pt. 1 & 2, p. 27.
43. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 93. Kakoti has furnished a valuable information with regard to the provenance of two amorous sculptures. The Assam State Museum houses a few such sculptures which have already been described. But no authentic record relating to this places of origin is found. In the past almost all the collections were handed over to the Assam State Museum. So it is highly possible that two of the displayed erotic sculptures are from Singri.
44. *ARASI.*, 1936-1937, p. 59, pl. XVIII. (e).
45. No erotic scenes from Khajurāho, Ellorā, Konārk, etc. offer a good deal of similarity with our erotic scenes. See O.C., Ganguli, "The Art of the Chandelas," 1957; Zannas, E.,

"Khaiurāho," 1960; Fouchet, Maxpol, *The Erotic Sculpture of India*, 1959. pp. 66-94, Gupta & Majumdar, *Ajanta & Eliora*, 1962, Pls. CVII-CXVII.

46. *ARASI* , 1936-1937, p. 59, Pl. XVIII, a.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
48. *Ibid.*, Pl. XVIII, e.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
50. *Ibid.*, This may possibly be interpreted as showing an erotic scene.
51. *Ibid.*, Pl. XX.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 59. Pl. XVIII, c.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.
54. Nath, R.M., *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, p. 89.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
56. Nath, R.M., has illustrated two independently sculptured figures of a boar and an elephant. The first is a figure of a boar, which is identified by Nath as the royal insignia of the Asura dynasty of Kāmarūpa while the second is a figure of an elephant which is identified as the royal insignia of the "Kāmarūpa kings". See his *Background of Assamese Culture*, 1948, Pl. IV. But the provenance of the figures are not mentioned. However, representation of the boar is seen in the stray stone *dvāras-khā* of some ruined temple, now lying in front of the residence of the D.C., Sibsagar. The Elephant was taken as the royal emblem by the pre-Āhom kings.
57. Gupta and Mahajan, *op. cit.*, Pl. LXXXI.
58. *ARASI.*, 1936-1937, p. 59.
59. *JASB.*, No. 1, 1855, p. 2.
60. *JARS.*, Vol. V, Nos. 1 & 2, p. 28.
61. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, p. 89.
62. *ARASI.*, 1924-1925, p. 98. Actually, the lion motif in old Assamese art is common, yet the figures of the lion are depicted in a crude form. This is why Banerji has made such a comment.
63. See No. 1088 in the *A.R.E.C.*, 1913-1914.
64. *ARASI.*, 1923-1924, pp. 80-81.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, 1924-1925, pp. 100-101.
67. *Ibid.*, 1906-1907, Pl. VIII, No. 5.
68. Figures of bulls found in Assam have already been discussed in the iconography chapter under the images of Nandi.
69. *ARASI.*, 1936-1937, p. 56.
70. *Ibid.*, 1906-1907, Pl. VIII, Fig. 6.
71. *Ibid.*, 1936-1937, Pl. XVIII, e. But the inner meaning of the couple is something different and it has already been discussed under 'Scenes from Epic'.
72. *Ibid.*, Pl. XVIII.
73. *Ibid.*, 1906-1907, Pl. VIII, and Barua, *op. cit.*, Pl. VIII. See also the list given by Bloch.
74. *Rupam*, No. 1, 1920.
75. Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, p. 177. Also see for references for the origin of *kirttimukha*.

76. *ARASI.*, 1936-1937, p. 58.
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Op. cit.*, p. 177.
79. *ARASI.*, 1936-1937, p. 58.
80. *JARS.*, Pt. 1 & 2, p. 39.
81. *ARASI.*, 1936-1937, Pl. XXC.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
84. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Ibid.*
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Ibid.*, 1924-1925, p. 97.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
91. *JASB.*, Vol. XXXIV, 1885, pp. 1-24.
92. *ARASI.*, 1924-1925, p. 97.
93. *Ibid.*, 1906-1907, also see Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, Pl. VIII.
94. Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, p. 180. Fig. 35. At present this piece of art is not to be seen. Probably it has been removed by somebody.
95. Nath, R.M., *JARS.*, Vol. V, Nos. 1 & 2, p. 37.
96. *Ibid.*
97. *Ibid.*
98. *ARASI.*, 1936-1937, p. 56.
99. *JARS.*, Vol. V, Nos. 1 & 2, p. 37.
100. *ARASI.*, 1936-1937, p. 58.
101. *JARS.*, Vol. V, Nos. 1 & 2, p. 33.
102. *ARASI.*, 1936-1937, p. 57.
103. *Ibid.*, 1906-1907, also see Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, Pl. VIII.

Chapter 5

Epigraphy

In all thirty inscriptions, belonging to the pre-Āhom period, have been discovered in Assam so far. Of these the earlist is the Nagājarī Khanikar gāon inscription (Fig. 8) which is also known as the Sarupathār stone inscription which is datable to A.D. 5th century. Till recently it was held that the Umāchal inscription (Fig. 9) datable to A.D. 5th century was the earlist inscription in Assam. But after the discovery of the Nagājarī Khanikar gāon stone inscription which was first deciphered by P.C. Choudhury and subsequently read and published by D.C. Sircar and finally received and published by M.M. Sarma[1] it has been accepted that it is earlier than the Umāchal rock-cut inscription by a few years although both of them are placed in A.D. 5th century on palaeographic consideration. All these inscriptions discovered in Assam have been deciphered and published by scholars. Moreover, B. Kakati[2] has contributed a substantial paper in which he has dealt with the place names and personal names in the early land grants of Assam. Hence, only the characteritic features of these inscriptions are described here under the following heads. They are—(1) Material and size etc. (2) Script and language (3) Era, (4) Style and matter and (5) Emblems.

1. MATERIAL AND SIZE : Three types of materials were used in recording the inscriptions. They are stone or rock, copper-plate and clay-seal. There are only five stone inscriptions—a) The Nagājarī Khanikar gāon stone inscription, b) The Deopānī Vishṇu image inscription, c) The Deopāni Hari-Har image inscription (Ist) and d) The Deopānī Hari-Har image inscription (2nd). The rock-cut inscriptions are

i) The Umāchal rock-cut inscription, ii) The Badgaṅga rock-cut inscription (Fig.19), iii) Tezpur rock-cut inscription of Harjjarvarman and iv) Kānāibarasi rock-cut inscription. The clay seals are represented by only their seals of Bhāskarvarman found at Nālandā. The Gachtal stone pillar inscription is the only pillar inscription discovered in Assam, so far. The remainning inscriptions are recorded in copper-plates.

The common use of coppe-plates may indicate (a) unfavouroble nature in Assam for stone or rock inscription and (b) the durability of copper-plates, easy for preservation in the house of the donees, as most of the cooper-plates were issued by the royal authorities for purpose of accolade and honorific investiture.

The copper-plate grants consist of plates of varied numbers. The maximum number of plates is seven, while its minimum number is three. Majority of them are, however, of three plates. There are only three grants, which consists of more than three plates, *i.e.* the Doobi grant (Fig 20) and the Nidhanpur grants of Bhāskara-varman both of which consist of six and seven plates respectively and the Assam plates of Vallabhadeva, which constists of five plates. There are some reasons for using more plates in a grant. The Doobi grants in its first part gives the genealogy of the kings of Kāmarūpa up to Bhāskara and the names of some of the queens, and contains eulogistic verses, which are quite long. In the second part, the grant records the victory of Bhāskara and his elder brother over a Gauḍa king. The last part of the grant records that the charater that was originally issued by Bhūtivarman was re-written and made clear and issued by Bhāskara to those very Brāhmaṇas. At the end it contains the names of the donees, From the chronological point of view, the Nidhanpur grant is the second among the three grants. This grant was issued from a place where triumphal ceremonies were held. In the first part of this grant the names of earlier kings and queens of Kāmarūpa are mentioned. It also contains eulogistic verses.

In the middle part of the grant are recorded the shares of the land donated to eighty-six Brāhmaṇs, belonging to twenty-four *gōtras*. In the last part of it is given the description of the boundary of the donated land. It is also mentioned that the original grant was made by Bhūtivarman, but as the plates of the grant were burnt, Bhāskara re-wrote it. The last of these three grants is the Assam plates of Vallabhadeva. The date of this record is S.E. 1106 (A.D. 1185). Unlike the above two grants, this grant does not have any special cause for having five plates. The simple reason is that the letters of each of the plates are bigger in size and while incising the letter, sufficient spaces are left on the borders of the plates of this inscription.

There are some grants of which one or two plates are missing. In each case, all the plates are joined together by a ring the ends of which are secured in a seal of the king. In each case, we find that the obverse of the first and reverse of the last plates are kept blank and the middle plates (or plate) are (is) inscribed on both the sides.

Majority of the copper-plates measure 24cm × 18cm or 26 cm × 21 cm the measurements various in some cases. For instance, the Śoālkuchi grant of Ratnapāla is 31cm in length and 22cm in breadth and the Nowgaon grant of Balavarman is 31cm in length and 18cm in breadth. But in case of rock-cut or stone inscriptions, no common measurement is found. The Gāchtal pillar inscription measures 71cm × 67cm.

2. SCRIPT AND LANGUAGE : In all the epigraphs, we find that the characters of the script belong to the eastern variety of Siddhamātṛka or Kuṭila script, which is sometimes designated as Early Nāgari. In fact, just as the modern script of Bengali and Assamese are quite similar to each other, so too, in these days the scripts used in the inscriptions of Assam and Bengal were quite similar. All the inscriptions found in Assam clearly show the line of development of the Eastern Script descending from the *kuṭila* type of Brāhmi.[3]

This script was not only used in Assam and Bengal, but also in Bihar, Nepal, Utter Pradesh and Orissa.[4] In A.D 12th century we find the final establishment of the Eastern Script in some inscriptions of Bengal[5] and certain inscriptions of Assam. For instance, the script of the Assam plates of Vallabhadeva, the Parvatiā plates of Vanamāla A,D. 12th century, the Kānai-baraśi rock inscription (A.D. 13th century) and Āmbari inscription (13th century) is to a great extent, similar to the modern Assamese script. But the script of the Umāchal rock inscription, the Baḍgaṅgā rock inscription and other grants, belonging prior to A.D. 10th century is quite different from the present one uaed in this region.[6]

The language of all these inscriptions is Sanskrit, the most popular language in this region those days.

3. ERA : Most of the inscriptions are not dated. Some inscriptions bear the regnal years of the rulers. In all, only seven records are dated. They are dated in two eras—the *Śaka* and the *Gupta* era. Of them only one bears the *Gupta* era. The Tezpur rock inscription of Harjjāravarmāna[7] is dated to 510 G.E. (A.D. 829-830). The five inscriptions bearing the Śaka era are the Assam plates of Vallabhadeva dated 1107 S.E. (A.D. 1187) kānāibaraśi inscription dated 1127 S.E. (A.D. 120) the Gāchtal inscription dated 1149 S.E. (A.D. 1127) and the Ambāri inscription dated in 1154 (A.D. (1232 From these records it is not clear when the *Gupta* era came to be used in Assam and when the *Śaka* era became popular and replaced the former.[8] But on the strength of the dates mentioned in these records, we can postulate that the *Gupta* era was relegated into the background after 510 G.E. (A.D. 829-830) and after *Gupta* era fell into disuse, the *Śaka* era came into use in 1148-1185 A.D. (1107 S.E.): The cause of the disuse of the *Gupta* era might be that with the downfall of the Guptas, their almanac also became unpopular. However, some era was to take place

of the *Gupta* era in Assam. As the *Śaka* era became well known by that time in the neighbouring State, people of this kingdom also preferred to use the same era.

It is a surprise that a local era, the *Kāmrūpa* era, by name, which was probably started by Bhāskara in A.D. 594,[9] is mentioned in an Assamese manuscript.[10] But the inscriptions of Assam give no clue to the existence of any indigenous era. In all probability, this local era was not much popular and it could not get royal recognition owing to the wide popularity of the *Gupta* era and the *Śaka* era.

4. STYLE AND MATTER : The inscriptions are composed both in prose and verse separately. Sometimes both prose and verse are mixed. For example, the Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla, the Parvatiyā plates of Vanamāla and the Gachtal inscription (copper plate) are written partly in prose and partly in verse. Instances of the epigraphs composed in complete verse are the Nidhanpur grant, the Nowgaon grant of Balavarman, the Puspabhadrā grant, *etc.* King Dharmapāla himself was a poet, who composed the verse of the first eight lines of his Puspabhadrā grant. The Kānāibaraśi rock inscription, the Tezpur rock inscription and the Ānabari inscription are instances of these epigraphied work, composed in prose. The Āmbari inscription seems to have thrown new light on the old Assam prose style.

These inscriptions can be divided into the following classes :

a. Commemorative,
b. Commemorative-cum-donative,
c. Eulogistic-cum-donative,
d. Eulogistic-cum-commemorative-cum-donative, and
e. Royal Decrees.

The Baḍgangā rock inscription is purely commemorative, because it records that Bhūtivarman performed an *aśvamedha* sacrifice. The Nālandā clay seals of Bhāskara, the Kānāibaraśı Umachal and Āmābāri inscriptions fall in the same category. The Assam plates of Vallabhadeva bears commemorative-cum-donative charactertistic feature. The Majority of the inscriptions of Kāmarūpa kings belong to the eulogistic-cum-donative class. For instance, the Nidhānpur grant and the Puṣpabhadrā grant fall in this class, because they contain many long eulogistic verses in the first parts and record the name or names of the donee or donees and the boundaries of the lands donated. Inscriptions having eulogistic-cum-commemorative-cum-donative theme are also not wanting.

The Doobi grant is of this class. It contains many long eulogistic verses in the first part. The second part of it records the victory over some ruler of Gauḍa, while the last part contains the names of the donees and the description of the land. The last class, *i.e.*, the royal decree, is represented by the Tezpur rock inscription, wherein certain royal order to fishermen is recorded.

Most of these inscriptions are of religious nature. B.K. Barua has rightly remarked that "most of the epigraphs record only transactiom of a religious character."[11] The donative inscriptions, carrying eulogistic verses, can be grouped, in a broad sense, under the religious head, as the donations were made out of devotion towards religion. However, inscription devoid of religious touch, are also known. The Tezpur rock-cut inscription is nothing but a royal decree without any religious touch. The Kānaibaraśī rock inscription is also of the same nature. It only records the defeat of the Turks (Bhakhtiyār).

True to the tradition of the inscriptional art of India, in Assam also, we find that some old inscriptions make mention of mythological allusions. Many of the inscriptions, having eulogistic verses, carry genealogical lists, where we mostly find the mythological allusions.

In such types of inscriptions, the various virtues and powers adoring kings are compared with those of the divinities like Indra, Vishṇu, Śiva, Varuṇa and so forth. The Doobi copper-plate (A.D. 7th century) is the first inscription to include this type of allusions. This inscription contains the maximum allusions. Here the kings of the Puṣyavarman line have been compared with gods like Indra, Śiva, Vishṇu, Chandra, Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya, Sūrya and Agni. The queens are compared with Śacī, Aditi, Padmā, Pārvatī and Lakshmi. In the same connection the heroes and heroines of the epics, *i.e.* the Mahābharata and the Rāmāyana, are also mentioned. They are Kṛshṇa, Balarāma, Devakī, Janaka, Rāmachandra and Daśaratha. In the Nidhanpur inscription also, comparison of the kings' deeds with those of the gods has been made, but not so elaborately as in the former case. There is a reason as to why the Doobi grant is rich in this aspect. This grant records a great victory over certain Gauḍa king. For this, it contains many long eulogistic verses wherein these comparisons are included. It is quite likely that these allusions of our inscriptions were imitated, though not bodily borrowed, from the Gupta inscriptions, such as the Allahabad pillar inscription,[12] the Bihar stone pillar inscription of Skandagupta,[13] the Bhitari stone pillar inscription of Skandagupta,[14] the Ap-Shad inscription of Ādityasena,[15] *etc.*, where this sort of mythodological allusions are found. It is to be noted that some traces of the Gupta influence in the inscriptions of Kāmarūpa were visible as late as A.D. 9th century as is evidenced from the Tezpur rock inscription. Hence, it is quite possible that, as far as the mythological allusions are concered, these inscription followed the Gupta traditions : In Bengal also there occur inscriptions, with mythological allusions which might have been borrowed from the Gupta records. For instance, the Belava copper-plate of Bhojavarmadeva[16] has this sort of allusions.

The rulers of the Sālastaṁbha line also used mythological allusions in their records. Evidently, they are imiated from the records of Varmana line, mentioned above. In the Parvatiyā plates of Vanamāla, Harjjārvarman is compared with Yudhishṭhara, Bhīma and Arjuna. Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma stand for Harjjara's religous discourses and might respectively, while Arjuna epitomized his (Harjjara's) proficiency in fighting.

The Pāla rulers of Kāmrūpa also maintained this tradition. For instance the Khonāmukhı grant of Dharmayāla includes mythological allusions. Here Brahmapāla is compared with Indrā, Indrapāla with Rāmadeva, Dharmpāla with Varāha, and Manaśvinı, the wife of the donee, with Gaurī and Lakshmī.

All this show that the different divinities of Śaiva and Vaishṇava pantheons and some other gods, such as Indra, Agni, *etc*. were included in the allusions. The avatāras of Vishṇu are rarely included. Only in the Dharmapāla's Khonāmukhī grant the king is compared with Varāha. The inclusion of the characters of the epics show that like the divinities they were also popular in Assam.

But the rock-cut inscriptions of Kāmarūpa do not mention any mythological allusion. Each of them consists of new lines and do not include eulogy. Therefore, owing to lack of space or other difficulties, probably, these allusions were omitted.

Majority of the inscriptions start with the invocation to God. Almost all the invocations, with the exception of a few are made to Śiva. In the Puṣpabhadrā grant of Dharmapāla, the Assam plates of Vallabhadeva, is made to Vishṇu. This shows that all the rulers of Assam prior to Dharmapāla (A.D. 12th century) were devotees of Śiva. Even Dharmapāla himself was a devotee of Śiva in his early part of life, as is proved by the invocations, made to Śiva in his first and second grants. The Puṣpabhadrā inscription is the third grant issued in his old age. This proves that he lastly accepted Vaishṇavism. Later, we find the invocation to Vishṇu in the Assam plates of Vallabhadeva. In this inscription, at the beginning, Vishṇu is invoked and next Gaṇeśa is praised in the first verse itself. The significance of the praise to Gaṇeśa here may be that engraver wanted to avoid difficulties or remove obstacles, if any, that may be in the way of his success. Most of the rock-cut inscriptions do not include invocations.

The imprecatory and benedictory verses, warning the future kings and others against depriving the donee of the grant and extrolling the benefits of making a grant, are not included in some copper-plate grants. Inscriptions like the Doobi and the Nidhanpur grants of Bhāskara, the Assam plates of Vallabhadeva, and several like works included these verses at the end. But the Puṣpabhadrā grant of Dharmpāla, the Khonāmukhi grant of the same king and the Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla, etc. do not include them. At the end of each of these inscriptions the name or names of the donee or donees, his or their ancestors and details of the land donated are mentioned. The exclusion of these verses might have stemmed from the fact that they make the inscription unnecessarily long. Moreover, traditionally, the past kings, probably, had not deprived any donees to whom lands were donated by any of their (kings') predecessors. There, was no doubt that the future kings would deprive the donee or donees. On the other hand, there is proof that the future kings took care of the past donees. For instance, the Nidhanpur grant was originally issued by Bhūtivarman, one of the predecessors of Bhāskara, and later when it was burnt, Bhāskara himself re-issued it to to the same donees.

As regards the opening formula or words or out inscriptions, there is not any hard and fast rule. There are variations. However, it can be well said that the majority of the copper-plate grants begin with the word "*Svasti*". Many of the inscriptions of the Pāla kings of Bengal also begin with the sign "*S*".[17] P. Bhattacharya has contributed a substantial paper on this subject.[18] According to him it is a sign of *Āñji*. The Tezpur rock inscription begins with "*Om Svasti*", The Bargāon copper-plate inscription of Ratnapāla starts with "*Svasti*", while the Parvatiyā plates of Vanamāladeva begins with "*Siddham Svasti*". Some plates start with a prayer. The Nidhanpur grant begins with "*Om*" only. The Assam plates of Vallabhadeva also start almost in the same way with the words, "*ōm ōm namah Bhagavate Vasudevaya*". A few inscriptions, like the Kānāibaraśī rock inscription, Gāchtal pillar inscription and others, do not have any particular prologomenary formula.

Inscriptions of Kāmarūpa do not have any closing formula. Most of the copper-plate grants have at the end a description of the boundaries of the land donated. Sometimes the names of the engravers of the grant occur at the end. The Doobi grant records at the end the names of the donees who were Brāhmans. The Tezpur rock-cut inscription at the end bears the date. It seems that the engravers of the inscriptions were not particular about the closing formula.

EMBLEMS : All the copper-plate grants of Assam, belonging to the pre-Āhom period, have each a seal (Fig. 74). The plates are joined together by a ring the ends of which are secured in a seal of the kings. The seal bears the emblem of the king. All the seals of the inscription are of one and the same type, there is no variation. The seal is heart-shaped and divided into two parts; the triangular upper part contains the figure of an elephant in relief and the semi-circular lower compartment bears the legend. The whole thing, in the language of A.F. Rudolf Hoernle, "looks like a heart-shaped box without a lid".[19]

In almost all the cases we find that the legend consists of the name of the king and his title. For instance, the seal of the Khonāmukhi inscription of Dharmapāla bears the legend of "*Svasti Prāgyotishādhipati-mahārājādhirāja Śrī Dharmapālavarmane vah.*[20] But a little variation is also noticed. The legend of the seal of the Doobi grant includes the genealogy of the kings in addition to the conventional title and the name of the king.[21] The clay seals of Bhāskaravarman also have the same type of emblems, *i.e.* an elephant, and have the same short legend. However, one seal gives the complete genealogy of the kings of the Varmana lines.[22]

Only a few iconographical references are made in a few inscriptions. The Deopāni Vishṇu image records installation of an image of Vishṇu.[23] Like this the two inscribed images of Hari-Hara from Deopāni record the installation of the image of

Hari-Hara.[24] Two bronze plaques from Kohib-pāra bear small inscriptions in the same way.[25] A Surya image from kāki bears a few incribed latter meaning the installetion of an image of Sūrya.[26] *The ghanta* from Kahilipāra records the donation of it for the gods.[27] At the end of the Guakuchi grant of Indrapāla, it is interesting to note that a figure of Garuḍa in the bird holding a *śankha*, *padma*, *cakra* and a *sarpa* has been beautifully shown, which is very important from sculptural point of view. This is the only inscription bearing sculptural evidence.[28]

As regards the architecture religious establishment references are found in the Umāchal rock-cut inscription, Tezpur grant of Vanamāla, Guwahati grant of Ratnapāla, Nowgaon grant of Vanamāla, Bargaon grant of Ratnapāla, and Āmbāri stone inscription.[29]

REFERENCES

1. He has named this inscription as Nagājarī-Khanikar gaon fragmentary stone inscription. See *Adhyan Paricaya*, Saikia, N. (Ed.) 1978, pp. 160-165; also *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. XXVI. 1981-82, pp. 12-26.
2. Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, Appx. 1, pp. 202-215. At Deoparvat, a slab of stone writings in late Nāgari character reading *dhe u ma* or (*gha*) was noticed (*A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-1937, p. 60). It is also reported that at Numaligarh (in the modern temple) one stone slab, bearing *gaja-vyala* motif shows four or five letters in *Nāgari* character of A.D. 13th/14th century. These are badly weathered. See *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-1937, p. 57. Stray inscribed letters, assignable to the pre-Āhom period are noticed at Urvasi and Śrī-Śūrya Pāhār and some other places including Kanaibarsi D. Chutia, Secretary, Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti, Guwahati, is at present studying them.
3. Neogi, M., "The Assamese-Bangali Script", *Indian System of Writing*, p. 19.
4. Ojha, G.H., *The Palaeography of India*, 1918, p. 86.
5. Choudhury, P.C., says that the Ambari inscription is composed in old Assamese script, mixed with Northern Indian Brāhmī and Devanāgarī. Further he thinks that this is the only inscription discovered, so far, which gives the introduction of old Kāmarūpī language and writing in prose *A.S.S.P.*, No. 1, 1971, pp. 84-87. and I.H., XLVIII, p. 100,
6. Neogi, M., *op. cit.*
7. See Verma, T.P., *Ancient Script of Kāmarūpa*, 1977, p. 30.
8. According to Bhattasāli, the Baḍgangā rock inscription of Bhutivarman is dated in *Gupta* era 235 (553-554 A.D.), see *JARS*, Vol. VIII, p. 138; *IHQ*, Vol. XXI, pp. 143 and *EI*. Vol. XXII, pp. 18-23. But Sircar, D.C., later took a better stampage of the inscription and argued that Bhattasali's reading was wrong. According to Sircar, the inscription is not dated; see *EI*, Vol. XXX, pp. 62-67.
9. *JARS.*, Vol. IX, Nos. 1 and 2, 47.
10. Choudhury, P.C., *op. cit.*, p. 19.

11. See 'The Kāmarūpa Era', *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. II, No. 1; also Bhuyan, S.K., (ed.), *Kāmarūpa & Buranji*, 1930, App. pp. 111 ff.
12. *Op. cit.*, p. 77.
13. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, pp. 1-18.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-52.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-56.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-5.
17. *E.I.*, Vol. XII, pp. 37-42.
18. *M.A.S.B.*, Vol. V, p. 102.
19. "The signs in ancient copper-plate inscriptions of Kāmarūpa", *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. I, p. 9.
20. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. LXVI, p. 114.
21. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 120.
22. *Ibid.*, Vol. XII, p. 33.
23. *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. VI, pp. 151-52; *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. IV, p. 89.
24. *E.I.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 329-30.
25. Mukherjee, B.N., *op. cit.*, pp. 45-49.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.
27. Sarma, D., *op. cit.*, p. 179.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
29. Bhattacharya, P., *op cit.*, p. 132 and the plate.

* The Silimpur stone inscription and the Kamauli grant have not been included in the above discussion since they were discovered out side Assam.

Chapter 6

Numismatics

Two hoards of coins belonging to the Pre-Āhom Period have been discovered in Assam, so far. The first hoard was discovered at Pāglāṭek about 15 km west of the Goālpārā town just on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, in 1972.[1] The second hoard was discovered in the Dhlāpādung Tea Estate, about 27 km north of Tezpur, near Rāngāpārā, in the last part of 1977.[2] It is reported that quite a good number of gold coins was also discovered at Pāglāṭek bazar just a little west of the modern temple, built over the old ruins on the river bank, while filling up the market area with the earth dug from only a little distance. But with great difficulty, only 14 coins could be recovered. Now all the coins have been preserved in the Assam State Museum.

All the 14 Pāglāṭek coins (one broken) are circular in shape, but vary in their thickness and weight between 5.8070 and 5.0220 grams as follows :[3] (Figs. 21, 22 & 23).

Coins No.	*Diameter in cms.*	*Weight in grams.*
1	1.75	5.47
2	2.5	5.7
3	1.45	5.75
4	2.5	5.8
5	2.00	5.7
6	1.75	5.52

7	—	—	2.25	—	—	5.5
8	—	—	1.75	—	—	5.3
9	—	—	2.00	—	—	5.65
10	—	—	2.5	—	—	5.5
11	—	—	2.5	—	—	5.65
12	—	—	2.00	—	—	5.72
13	—	—	1.87	—	—	5.7
14	—	—	2.25	—	—	5.71

Though the metal looks yellow, yet it appears, it is not pure gold and perhaps is also not uniformly alloyed. The thin coins of the collection seem to be more alloyed. But anything about the metal may be said with certainty only after proper analysis. All the coins have uniform motifs. They are as follows :

Obverse : Within a circular dotted border (truncated), a male figure standing in the *tribhanga* posture to the right, holding a bow in his left hand and an arrow in his right hand which is stretched forward. To the proper right of the figure, near the arrow is *dhvaja* (standard). On the border some crude letters are seen.

Reverse : Within a circular dotted border some crude device, which is not very clear, may represent a female figure, standing to the right ; two or three curved lines in relief appear at the back of the standing female figure.

Motifs on the obverse and the reverse side are extremely crude. However, the figures can be identified. The figure shown on the obverse would represent an archer, while the figure on the reverse represent Lakshmī. Here it can be safely concluded that the coins in question are in imitation of the Archer type coins of the rulers of the imperial Gupta dynasty.

The second hoard of coins, discovered at Dhulāpādung,[4] which are now preserved in the Assam State Museum, numbers 33 in all excluding a few broken pieces. All the coins are round. But they are not uniformly circular. Other details are as follows :

Obverse : All the coins bear a letter on this side in relief. Except this letter there is no trace of anything on it. It is same in all the cases. Twenty six of the coins bear the letter '*Va*', Three of the eighteen broken pieces of coins show the same letter. The numbers of coins bearing the letter '*Va*', are as follows : Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32 and 33. The numbers are given in the photograph of the coins. These do not include the broken coins bearing the same letter. The letters on the coins Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 19, 24, 28, 32, 33 and one of the broken pieces of coins appear to be more developed than those of others. Four of the coins of the hoard bear the letter '*ha*'. These are Nos. (as given in the photograph) 6, 29, 30 and 31. The remaining three coins, *i.e.* Nos. 15, 17, and 22 are uncommmon and it is difficult to say actually what they read. Coin Nos. 17 & 22 are quite similar to each other. They bear one and the same shape of letter which is just apposite to the shape of the letter '*Va*'.

Reverse : The reverse side of all the coims do not bear any engraving and are shown as blank. The measurement and the weights of the coins are as follows : (Figs. 43 & 44)

Coins No.	*Diameter in cm.*	*Weight in grm.*
1	3	4.6694
2	3.2	4.8710
3	2.7	13.9130
4	2.9	9.2828
5	2.6	15.7368
6	3.1	15.8725
7	2.9	9.6940
8	2.7	3.3123
9	2.8	4.0347
10	2.9	5.4432
11	2.9	8.0488
12	2.5	9.2014
13	2.7	2.4490
14	2.7	4.1943
15	2.7	4.0062
16	2.9	3.8428
17	2.8	6.2495
18	2.7	6.2401
19	2.7	4.1942
20	2.5	1.9447
21	2.5	2.3020
22	2.6	2.5130
23	2.5	3.5063
24	2.8	6.9527
25	2.8	3.2820
26	3	6.5400
27	2.8	8.7078

28	—	—	2.9	—	—	7.9134
29	—	—	3	—	—	15.5648
30	—	—	2.8	—	—	15.2119
31	—	—	3.1	—	—	12.3016
32	—	—	3.9	—	—	8.1242
33	—	—	3	—	—	10.729

(The weights are correct up to the fourth place of decimal).[5]

In view of the abesence of any detailed legend or symbol, *etc.* on the coins it has become a problem with regard to their real identity. But, at the same time, they are quite interesting and very valuable. Surprisingly enough, two copper coins of the same type were found unrecorded in the Assam coins cabinet, now attached to the Assam State Museum after the discovery of the Dhulāpādung coins. These two coins are strikingly similar to the coins from Dhulāpādung. It is highly possible that these coins were minted in the same mint. The obverse sides of the coins bear the letter '*Vā*' in each case, while the reverse are blank. These two coins, collected year back by somebody, were lying unnoticed, all records regarding these having been untraceable. The Assam State Museum authority has very recently collected two Dhulāpādung type coins from a place near Mangaldoi. Both the coins are made of copper (?) and offer striking similarity to those from Dhulāpādung. It is reported that a hoard of such coins were discovered which were melted by the local people for their monetary gain. With great difficulty only two could be collected. One of them, it appers was hammered and so it has lost the letter. The other coin bears on the obverse the usual one letter legend.

Recently J.P. Singh,[5a] while delivering Prof. K.K Handique Memorial lectures on the "Monetary Development in Eearly Assam" has argued the existence of a numismatic tradition in early Assam. The existence of this tradition is suggested by some epigraphic material and is now confined to the discovery of coins from Dhulāpādung Tea Estate and also from Mangaldoi. Besides these copper coins now some other coins too are assigned to Assam. Singh has attributed a gold coin to Harshapāla Varmanadeva of the Pāla dynasty of Kāmarūpa (Fig. 45) and another to king Pṛthu of old Assam. The coin of Pṛithu (Figs. 24&25) according to him is the possible source of inspiration behind the coins known form Pāglātek. The similarities between the coins of Pṛithu and those from Pāglātek are taken by him to suggest that the latter were struck in the Assam region sometime after king Pṛithu.

Singh's view is not convincing, because The Pāglatek coins are the imitated Gupta gold coins. Exactly similar coins have been discovered in a number of places in Bangladesh and they are dated around A.D. 7th century. King Pṛthu flourished in A.D. 13 century.[5b] It is not possible to arrign the Pāglātek coins to the 13th century or 14th century on stylistic consideration or otherwise.

Now, looking at the coins from Pāglātek one would be inclined without any hesitation to take them as imitations of some gupta gold coins, issued by some rulers after the fall of the gupta dynasty. Similar types of imitated gupta coins were also found at Bogra, Jessore, Faridpur, Dacca and Mainamatī (now in Bangladesh) as well as in Tripura. Specially a good number of imitated gupta coins including silver coins, which were discovered at Mainamati, have thrown a new light on the currency that prevailed in the post-Gupta period in the Bengal region.[6] From the distribution of these coins to East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and Tripura, it appears, as D.C. Sircar thinks, their circulation was further extended to Pāglātek in Assam. It is further said that such types of coins were issued in eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh) after Śaśāṅka's death in the first half of A.D. seventh century. Apparently, these coins were not popular money in the dominions of the Pālas.[7] Who were the authors of these coins are not yet ascertained. These might have been issued by some local petty rulers in imitation of the Gupta coins. It is difficult to suggest that this practice of issuing imitated Gupta gold or silver coins continued beyond A.D. 8th century.[8] Definitely, they were not issued either by the Pālas or the Senas of Bengal.

Surprisingly enough, not a single coin, issued by any rulers of the Pāla and the Sena dynasties of Bengal, has been discovered so far.[9] Some inscriptions of the Pālas refer to the old silver coin, variously mentioned in them as *Drama*, *Puranānand karshopana* as well as the *cowrie*-shell. The Arab merchant Sulaiman, in his writing (A.D 851), said that East Indian empire of the Pālas maintained trade by means of *cowries*. Literary evidence, pertaining to the circulation of *cowrie*-shells in the regime of the Sena king Lakshmansena, is also available.[10] As in Bengal, in Assam too, we get a similar picture. Excepting the imitated Gupta coins from Pāglāṭek and the coins from Dhulāpādung, so far no coins of the pre-Ahom period have come to light. The coins from Pāglātek possibly found their way to Assam from East Bengal (Bangladesh). They cannot be taken as the coins of the Kāmarūpa kings. We surmised earlier that Pāglāṭek coins might have been issued by some Kāmarūpa kings.[11] But, after studying the cases of the discoveries of similar imitated coins in other places of Bangladesh, we are inclined to believe that the coins in questions were issued by some other ruler who ruled further west of Kāmarūpa in *c.* A.D. 7th century. Possibly, in Assam in that period the barter system prevailed and *cowrie*-shells were in circulation as in Bengal.[12] We have evidence to show that *cowrie*-shells were the principal media of exchange in pre-Āhom Assam. The Tezpur rock-cut inscription of Harjjarvarman of A.D. 829, bespeaks of a fine of *pañca-vuttika* or 5 *Bindis*, *i.e.* 20 *cowrie*-shells.[13] That the *cowrie*-shells were used as media of exchange even in a later period is proved by the Nilachal plates of Mādhava, who ruled in the A.D. 15th century.[14] It is mentioned in the Silimpur stone inscription from the Bogra district of Bangladesh that Jayapāla, a king of Kāmarūpa (A.D. 11th or 12th century) offered to donate nine hundred of gold (*i.e.* gold coins) to a Brāhmaṇa, named Prahāsa, in connection with a Tulāpurusha ceremony, performed by the king. Sircar rightly thinks that Jayapāla might have issued a limited number of gold coins for the donation purpose only.[15]

Now let us examine the meanings of the letter '*Va*' and '*ha*' of the coins from Dhulāpādung. Both the letters of the coins bear the character of the 9th century.[16] The letter 'Va' may mean the first letter of Vanamālavarman or Balavarman. Both were kings of Kāmarūpa. The letter '*ha*' may mean king Harjjarvarman. All the three kings may be assigned to A.D. 9th century. Harjjarvarman may be placed in the first half of the A.D. 9th century. Vanamālavarman may be assigned to the middle of A.D. 9th century, while Balavarman may be placed in the last part of the same century.[17] Sircar[18] and Bhattacharya[19] also have expressed the same opinion. In this connection, it should be mentioned that there was a tradition of mentioning royal names by their initial letters. In a late work, Haragaurīsaṁvāda, the legendary kings of Assam are found in the same fashion.[20] *Aryamañjuśrīmulakalpa*, a work of about the A.D. 8th century, mentions kings by the initial letters of their names.[21]

Hundreds of Āhom, Koch and Kachārī coins have come to light. But so far not a single coin, bearing the initial of the name of the issuing authority, *i.e.* the king of that period, has been discovered. One-letter legend on coins is not found in any other coins, except the Manipuri coins of a later period. For instance, the coins of Bhāgya Chandra (A.D 1759 1798) bears only a letter representing 'Bha'. The coins of Lālvanya Candra (A.D. 1798-1800) bear 'La' on their obverse sides and so on.[22] The reverse sides of these coins like those from Dhulāpādung are always blank. The tradition of keeping the reverse blank are restricted to only a few type of coins in India. As far as we know, this tradition was started in *c.* A.D. 7th century in Eastern India, as is proved by the coinage of Harikela, now in Bangladesh. In the case of these coins we find that the reverses are kept blank.[23] In the collection of the Assam State Museum a thin copper coin, bearing a Persian legend on its obverse, and showing a blank reverse side is noticed. The coin which evidently belongs to some Muslim ruler of Bengal, has yet to be properly studied.[24]

We find this one-letter legend style on the coins from Dhulāpādung and lastly in the Manipurī coins. Why a single Āhom coin does not bear this style is not known. Similarly, the style of keeping the reverse of the coins blank was introduced by the Harikela coins in *c.* A D. 7th century, which was continued by the Dhulāpādung coins of A.D. 9th century. That the same tradition was followed in some Muslim coins of the mediaeval period is evident from the solitary Muslim coin in the State Museum. Lastly, we see the continuation of this tradition in the Manipurī coins.

To sum up the discussion, the gold coins of Pāglātek must have been brought from the Bengal region, where the tradition of issuing such a type of coins in the post-Gupta period was in vogue. The *Cowrie*-shell was an important medium of exchange in trade. The gold coins meant to be donated by king Jayapāla might not have been issued to be used in trade or exchange and the Dhulāpādung coins might have been issued by king Harjjarvarman and Vanamālavarman or Balavarman for limited circulation. Sircar[25] says that the *cowrie*-shell and the barter system played a vital role as the media of exchange in pre-Āhom Assam. But, then, why Harjjarvarman and others issued coins with the one-letter legend is not answered by him. It shows that side by side with cowri-shell, the coin was also in circulation at that time in Kāmarūpa, unlike in the Bengal region.

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14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. See Verma, T.P., *Development of the Script of Ancient Kāmarūpa*, Assam Sāhitya Sabhā, 1976, Table, VIII, p. 53.

17. Sircar, D.C., *op. cit*.

18. *Ibid.* In the inscriptions of Kāmarūpa kings datable to A.D. 9th century the letter 'Ba' is not to be found. The letter 'Va' was used to pronounce 'Va' as well as 'Ba'; see Verma, *op. cit.*, table VIII, p. 53.

19. Bhattacharya, P.N., *op. cit*.

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Chapter 7

Conclusion

The study of the aspects in the preceding pages offers an insight into the pre-Āhom culture of Assam. Here an attempt is made to review our whole study in brief and sum up the findings.

Possibly, it will not to be out of place to write a few lines about the pre-historic culture of this region in connection with the culture of the period under review. If we peep into the pre-historic period of Assam and her neighbouring States: it is found that the palaeolithic people were the earliest settlers and they had their migration possibly from South India to South-East Asia through North-east India and *vice-versa.*[1] Evidence of neolithic culture has been found in many places throughout the North-eastern India.[1a] On the basis of the present evidence, it can be postulated that there is no positive proof for an independent origin of the neolithic culture in Assam. On the other hand, there is ample evidence to show that neolithic culture of Assam bears a close affinity with that of South-East Asia.[1b] It differs singnificantly from the neolithic culture of South India. But it has some common traits, only in respect of stone tools, with Santal Parganas and South Bihar.[2] This culture of Assam and her neighbouring States, specially Meghalaya, Most probably owes its origin to some source in the eastern Asia which may life in the high lands of South-east China and North Vietnam. It is quite possible that the Mongolians who came to the Brahmaputra Valley in successive waves brough the culture.[3] Worman rightly says that Assam seemed to have served as corrider between the Indian mainland and South-East Asia through which neolithic traditions came to the eastern half of India.[4]

Assam received the Aryans or the Sanskrit-speaking people who may also be called Indo-Aryan speaking people from the middle of India or Upper India at a very late period. Before the advent of these peoples the "Asuras" and the "Dānavas" were ruling in Assam. The Aryan migration to this region took place in the early centuries of the Christian era. Bengal was Aryanised a little earlier as the archaeological objects prove. In this respect from the Mahāsthan inscription of the Maurya period we get corroborative evidence supported by the punch marked coins. By all means essential feature of an Aryan society was present in Bengal by A.D. 500, as the available evidence shows.[5] It is evident from the land grants of rulers of Bengal, belonging to A.D. 600 and subsquent periods, that Brāhmaṇas belonging to various gôtras from upper India came to Bengal and settled all over this region. Assam received the Brāhmaṇas of different gōtras, mentioned in the land grants of the rulers of Kāmarūpa, from Mid-India. This shows that compared to other parts of India, excepting Bengal, Assam received the Aryan culture quite late, and not in a fairly early period, as is claimed by B.K. Barua.[6] He further contends that Assam had contacts with India since the Mauryan period.[7]

This view requires an explanation. The Mahāṣṭhan inscription seems ro suggest the inclusion of North-Bengal in the Maurya empire.[7a] There is little information about the socio-economic life of Kāmarūpa in the pre-Christian period and about its relations with the Mauryas.[7b] Barua has made such comments possibly on the basis of the suggestion of this inscription. But, so far, not a single specimen of punch-marked coinage, which, might have in one of its periods of circulation, formed the currency of Maurya empire, nor any inscription of that age has come to light in Assam. Punch-marked coins in a good number have been discovered in the Bengal region.[7c] However, if the miniature votive *stupas* and the caverns at Śri-Śūrya pāhār, as Sarasvati[7d] thinks, can be dated to *c.* A.D. 100 or 100 B.C., it—will not be difficult with more pieces of evidence to push back the beginning of of Assam link with historic cultures of India to the very beginning of the christian era to the Maurya age. Barua[7e] might have also taken into consideration the identification of the place name. Suvarnakuḍya, mentioned in *arthaśāstra*, as producing the best quality of *dukūla* along with Soṇkuḍiyā, a well-known village in the Kāmarūpa district of Assam. This identification was made by J.C. Ray, according to whom Suvarṇakuḍya produced the five fabrics of gold colour, known as *dukūla.*[7f] It is supported by K.L. Barua[7d] This indentification may be right from the etymological point of view, but there is no corroborative evidence nor there is any strong tradition of exporting *dukūla* from the kingdom of Kāmarūpa or Prāgjyotisha to upper India in the days of Kauṭilya, the author of *Arthaśāstra*. But to be sure, from Gupta period onwards, Kāmarūpa had constant relation with other parts of the country. Archaeological excavation may throw new light in this connection.

As soon as the Indo-Aryan speaking people entered into and settled in the Brahmaputra Valley, Assam embarked upon a new phase of civilization. With the spread of Aryan Culture or *Arya-dharma* in the Valley, Hindu religion in its various forms became very popular. Within a short span of time this faith could attract the mind of the people of the region in such a way that even some non-Aryan tribes also accepted Brahmanical religion and culture.

Amongst the important cults that existed in the Assam Valley were Śaiva, Vaishṇava, Śākta, and Saura. P.C. Choudhury[8] thinks that the worship of Śivā prevailed in the region even before Naraka. But there is no archaeological evidence to support this theory. However, traditional demon king, Bāṇa, who is said to have been contemporary of Naraka is belived to have been devout Śaiva. But looking at the archaeological evidence, we can postulate that the cult became well developed in the early Christian centuries. All the kings of Kāmarūpa upto Dharmapāla, patronised Śaivism. There is definite archeological evidence to show that during the Gupta period Śaivism became a well developed cult in North India.[9] Bengal was surely under the influence of this growing faith and it is evident from inscriptions that before the end of the A.D. 5th century, Śiva was worshipped in the liṅga form in parts of North Bengal.[10] All this shows that the stream of this faith flew as far east as Assam and like some of the rulers of Bengal all the royal authorities of Kāmarūpa upto Dharmapāla regarded Śiva as their tutelary deity.

Vaishnavism was popular in Assam from early time, for, the Kāmarūpa rulers traced their lineage to Vishṇu through Naraka, according to a legendary belief. But there is hardly any doubt that Vaisanvism became popular in the land at least by the 5 th-6 th century A.D. We have archaeological evidence[11] to show that the cult became popular in Bengal by A.D. 5th century. In Kāmarūpa too the faith existed in A.D. 5th century, as known from the Umācal rock inscription.[11a] Vaishṇavism, popularly known as Bhāgavatism, patronised by the Guptas, found its way to Bengal in the Gupta period and was firmly established in the Pāla period.[12] As in Bengal, in Assam also from the 8th century onwards the rapid development of the faith is proved by the iconographic evidence. The sculptural representation in the Guākuchī grant of Indrapāla (A.D. 100) show that thongh the king was a Śaiva officially, yet he regarded vaisnavism too.[12a] The cult became very popular from about the beginning of the 11th century to the end of 12th century and onwards. The extreme popularity of the cult in the 12th century, in all probability was caused by Jayadeva[13] (A.D. 12th century), the illustrious Vaishṇava propagator of Bengal, and probably due to this effect Dharmapāla (A.D. 12th century), a ruler of Kāmarūpa, who was previously a Śaiva, at his old age, gave up Śaivism and accepted Vaishṇavism.

The birth-place of Śaktism as a definite sect seems to have been eastern India, as remarked by Eliot.[13a] Wilson also thinks that Assam or at least North-east Bengal seems to have been in a great degree the source from which Tāntrism and Śaktism proceeded.[14] P.C. Choudhury thinks that the origin and later growth of some of the important elements of Śaktism and Tāntrism are to be attributed to the non-Aryans in ancient Assam and the foundation of both the faiths was largely laid by the megalithic culture of Assam.[15] It seems true that some of the elements, such as human and animal sacrifice, *etc.*, performed in connection with the Śakti worship in the State, were derived from the beliefs and customs of the tribal culture affiliated to the non-Aryans. That at least Kāmākhyā and Jāmreśvarī temples were great centres of Tāntrism and Śaktism is proved by the archaeological evidences.

THE KĀLIKĀ-PURAṆA : This is believed to have been composed in this region about A.D. 8th/9th century,[16] which gives the iconographical descriptions of several Śākta goddesses. But, surprisingly, archaeological data, belonging to a period earlier that 9th-10th century, are very scarce. We do not get any clear-cut idea from the inscriptions of the Kāmarūpa kings about the wide prevalence of the cult in those days. However, several images of Mahishamardinī, a few images of Cāmuṇḍā and Kālī,[16a] that have come to light in the valley, conclusively prove that the Śakti worship was certainly prevalent in this region in the mediaeval period. Even at the present time, the Durgā-pūjā festival is performed most colourfully by the Hindus of eastern India. There are certain temples of Devī, for instance, Kāmākhyā temple, where the deity is worshipped in the aniconic form. Definitely this practice existed in the *Śakta-pīṭhas* of Assam in olden days.

That once the cult of Sūrya was popular in this land is quite evident from the very name Prāgjyotisha. Tārānāth[16b] refers to the fact that the people of Kāmarūpa were the worshippers of Sūrya, prior to the advent of Dhitika, who spread Buddhism in Assam. It is also supported by the temple of Navagraha in Guwahati and Shrī-Sūrya-Pāhār. The present temple at Navagraha is, however, not very old. We have iconographic evidence to show that the cult existed at least from A.D. 6th century to the end of A.D. 12th century Quite a good number of the images of Sūrya have come to light. Of them the majority belong to 11th-12th century. The cult became very popular about the same time in Bengal, as some of the Sena rulers became devotees of Sūrya.[17] We have no much archaeological evidence to show that the worship of the deity was popular in the Āhom period. Unlike the other cult deities, Sūrya is not worshipped by the people of Assam at present.

The worship of Manasā was in vogue in Assam in the past, as in the present time. The prevalence of the worship of this goddesses in Assam in the past is proved by some extant image, belonging to about A.D. 11th-12th century. It is not unlikely that the worship of this goddess did spread to Assam from the Bengal region. At present the Khāsis also worship snakes. But their worship is different and has nothing to do with the Manasā cult, prevalent in the Brahmaputra Valley.

Though we get images of the different deities of the Hindu pantheon, other than mentioned above, yet we have no knowledge of their cults. It is difficult to know the exact origin and spread of the different cults of the Hindu religion in Assam in a chronological sequence, as the archaeological findings are found scattered, and not in their original structure and position at that. However, we can infer that different cults flourished more or less simultaneously in Assam, and in spite of the existence of different cults side by side, there might not have been any sectarian jealousy. This is comparable with the situation, as in Bengal.[18]

Buddhism and Jainism had some pockets in Assam, as is evident from archaeological objects. Traces of existence of Hinduism, Hinayān Buddhism and Jainism can be seen in the rock-cut sculptures at Srị-Sivya Pāhār. The miniature rock-cut votive *stūpas* and the rock-cut caverns at the place and at Pañcaratnaghāt represent the Buddhist relics. The Hindu divinities are represented at Pañcaratnaghāt by a *Śivalinga* of a ruined temple and the row of rock-cut sculptures representing Śiva Harihara, Vishṇu, Gaṇeśa, *etc*. at Sri-Sūrya Pāhār shows the existence of Hinduism at the place, while the rock-cut scultptures at the same place representing Nemināth and Ṛshabhanāth show the existence of Jainism. As such Srī-Sūrya Pāhar is a meeting place of three religions. Here, it appears that the miniature votive-*stūpas* and the caverns were chiselled in the early Christian centuries,[19] while the representation of Jaina and Brāhmaṇical gods were sculptured about 8th-9th century. There are also other images of the Buddhist gods and goddesses, which are mostly of portable nature. Many of them must have been taken from Bihar and Bengal. With this small number of Buddhist and Jaina relics, it is difficult to say that Buddhism and Jainism were flourising religions in Assam. On the other hand, all the Kāmarūpa Kings were Hindus. Hieun Tsiang reported in his account that there were hundreds of Deva temples in Kāmarūpa, Kūmar Bhāskaravarman himself and his subjects were worshippers of Devas. However, there were some people in Kāmarūpa who worshipped Buddha secretly and Bhāskaravarman had a great respect for the Lord. All this shows that though in the mediaeval period, Buddhism was not accepted by the people in Kāmarūpa, yet there were some pockets of Buddhismann so also Jainism However, it is true that Tāntrik-Buddhism was prevalent in Assam, mixed with Tāntrik Hinduism. Traces of Buddhist rituals have been found in some secret rituals of Hinduism in Assam.[20]

Archaeological objects of this state, specially belonging to the period under review, are not plentiful. Moreover, they are greatly destroyed by the well-known natural calamities—rain and earthquake. They are scattered throughout the state making it difficult to study their chronology. In all thirty inscriptions, the earliest being the Nagājari Khanikargāon stone inscription A.D. 5th century, belonging to the period under review have been discovered. Of them three are clayseals. But some of the inscriptions are not informative to a considerable degree. In all the epigraphs we find that the character of the script belong to the eastern variety of Siddhamātrikā or Kuṭila script, which is often called Early Nāgari. The language of all the inscriptions is Sanskrit. The copper-plate grants of the kings of Assam are quite similar to those of the contemporary kings of Bengal. Most of the four inscriptions are not dated. A few of them bear dates in terms of the Gupta era and the Saka era. Evidently, there systems of dating were borrowed from the contemporary inscriptions of the neighbouring regions. The script of the inscriptions from Assam has a good deal of similarity with those of Bengal. But the seal of each of the copper-plate inscriptions, appears to have its own style.

The architectural monuments of this region are in ruins. They are not in their original places, and hence are in a great disorder. As such, the fragments of architectural objects are not fit for a comparative study. The *dvāra* noticed at Daparvatīā is of extraordinary merit. The carvings of the *dvāra* portrays the characteristic features of the Sārnāth School of the Gupta art. The figures of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, as in our *dvāra*, are also found in the *dvāras* of Doegorh, Tigovā, Bhumāra, and Nāchñakuthāra temples, belonging to the Gupta period. But they are heavy and rough in execution, while our *dvāra* with figures of the river goddesses is light and it has the sense of proportion and sensitiveness. Hower, the *candrasālā* design of the *śirapaṭṭi* of our *dvāra* shows close resemblance with those of the *dvāras* of the Gupta period, mentioned above. A *dvāra* of similar design has been noticed in North Bengal.[20a] The *dvāra* depicting the figures of Gangā and Yamunā preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta is also quite similar to ours. But the slight difference is that it is not so refined as ours. The simple plan of the ruined temple has early characteristic features.

The *dvāra*, found at Mājgāon, Tezpur, to a later period than that of Daparvatīā. It may be inferred that the artist in carving the image of the river goddesses of the Mājgāon *dvāra* followed the same tradition depicted in Daparvatīā *dvāra*. But here the peculiarity is that along with the figures of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, those of Dvārapāla and Nandī are also depicted.

The beautifully decorated huge *dvara-śirapaṭṭi* from Tezpur is of rare type. It is assigned to A.D. 9th century. A stone slab from Tezpur bears on it a conventional representation of the *candraśālā* pattern, so common in the temples of central India, specially those in the Rewa district and at Khajurāho.[21] A sixteen-sided *stambha* which is seen in Cole Park, Tezpur, is ornamented with a broad *paṭṭa*, having Kirttimukha at the top and the lower with dentils. Over the *paṭṭa* a shaft is round and "appears to be latheturned like the upper parts of the Western Chalukyan columns of the Bombay Presidency".[22] It is possible to borrow something from central India to Kāmarūpa so far as the temple architecture is concerned. But the chālukyan columns, it appears, had no influence in Kāmarūpa for geographical reasons.

The outlines of the mouldings of the *adhishṭhanas* of the same motifs and figures as those in other parts of North India. The ornamentation of the *adhīshthana* mouldings bears close similarity to those at Orissa.[23] The miniature temples of *śikhara* type, seen at Kāmarūpa, and Dīrgheśrī show design, noticed in some Orissan temples.[24] This type of the *śikhara* designs sometimes is noticed also on the *śilāpaṭṭa* of some Buddhist sculptures of the Pāla school.[25] The *gajathara* mouldings seen at the *adhishṭhāna* of the Hājo temple belong to the pre Kailaśa temple, Ellora. Similar *gajathara mouldings* are employed in the ruined temple at Numālīgarh, Guwahati and in a few places are noticed.

A peculiar feature of the Assamese temple architecture is that the level of the floor of the *garbhagṛha* is lower than that of the *maṇḍapa*. If we enter a temple of Assam, it is found that in order to reach the *vedī* or the place where the image of the chief deity is installed in the *garbhagṛha*, a *sopana* of stone is arranged, linking the *garbhagṛha* and the *maṇḍapa*. The temples of Kāmākhyā, Hājo, Umānanda, Gupteśvar temple, Śingrī etc. have this characteristic feature. It appears this tradition existed in the temples of the pre-Āhom period, also because the extant ones are renovated during the days of the Āhoms and the Kochas. We do not know if these temples were built right on the *adhishthānas* of the old temples, but it is certain that these temples were built in the old sites. In some cases it is found that the stone slabs of old construction are fitted into the *bhiṭṭis* or *adhishthanas* of the temples of later construction. At Mikirāti, however, a ruined *garbhagṛha* housing a Śivaliṅga is seen. It can be easily seen that the level of the floor of the *garbhagṛha* was lower than that of the *maṇḍapa* where a Sivaliṅga is seen in situ. But from the ruins of the temples at Kenduguri, Mornoi, it can be guessed Bāmuni fill, Daparvatiā and Singrī T.E., that the levels of the *garbhagṛha* were not lower than those of the *maṇḍapas*. Low levelled *garbhagṛhas* are seen outside Assam also. The level of the *garbhagṛha* of the Kukudeśvara temple at Pur, twelve miles West of Junnar, is lower than that of the *maṇḍapa*.[6] The same feature is noticed in the Ambarnāth temple and the Pāshān temple near Poona. The *garbhagṛha* of Bateśver temple North Bengal is of same style.

As regards the superstructure, *i.e. śikhara* of the temples of the period under review, we cannot have any idea, as all the temples have fallen down during earthquakes. It is difficult to have a clear picture from the stray architectural pieces lying in great disorder. However, the miniature *śikhara* design noticed on the *śirapaṭṭīs* at Majgāon, Cole-park, Tezpur and rock-cut miniature temple designs at Kāmakhyā throw some light in this direction. We have reasons to believe that the pre-Āhom temples were constructed in the same style. There miniature *śikharas* reflect Orisian styles and they may be dated to A.D. 9th-10th or 11th century. It is possible that as the Pālas of Bengal were Buddhists, the Hindu people of Kāmarūpa, had more relations with Orissan Hindu people on religious grounds than the Buddhists of Bengal, in spite of favourable geographical factors. This reason may be responsible for the carving of Orissa miniature *śikhara* motifs in the art of Assam. The Gupteśvar at Singrī, although renovated at a later period, is evident that some old architectural members must have been used while renovating it. If the present temples was re-buit in the old pre-Āhom style, is not very clear. It appears that the *adhishthānas* and the *bhiṭṭi* portions of the present Siddheswari temple, Soālkuchi are original and should be dated to *c.* A.D. 10th-11th century.

Some of the specimens of sculpture from Assam offer a good deal of stylistic similarity with those from other regions of India. The torracotta figurine from Daparvatiā are more or less similar to those from Sagar, Raghurāpur, Bangarh, Pāhārpur and Nālandā. In fact, the terrocotta figurines from all these places including Kuṇḍilnagar and Daparvatīā represent the fifth school, *i.e.* the eastern Indian mediaeval school.[27] However, in style Daparvatīā sculpture is static while the Kuṇḍilnagar specimens are dynamic, and in date, Daparvatīā sculpture is earlier. The dancing scene, sculptured on a long slab of stone, preserved at Cole-Park, Tezpur, can be well compared with a dancing scene from Khajurāho, illustrated by Kramrisch.[28] No eratic sculptures from Assam offer similarities with the erotic sculptures of Khajurāho, Konārk, Ellorā and other places of India. This type of sculpture has its own peculiarity. Most of the erotic sculptures from Assam are depicted in the culminating point of their sexual desire. Probably, these sculptures were affected by growing popularity of Tāntrism in this region. The Pingalesvar ruined temple and the Madan Kāmdev ruined temple have yielded quite a good number of such sculptures. Had these temples been not fallen down they would have defenitely been able to attract the scholars and visitors to a great deal line the temples of the other parts of the country.

The figures of the male worshipper, mother and child the female pouring water from a pot, the male blowing a *śaṅkha,* sculptured in separate blocks of stone and stuck into the western *prākāra* of the Kāmakhyā temple, are worth mentioning. The physiognomy of these figures, except the figures of the mother and child, suggests that they have some tribal feature. C.C. Barman[29] says that they were the product of the artist of the Āhom period. But the style and physiognomy of these sculptures are quite different from those of the Āhom sculptures. Our conjecture is that all these three sculptures were executed in the pre-Āhom period by some tribal sculptor. The sculpture of mother and child is finely done. Two mother and child sculptures, one from Bhinmal[30] and the other from Satrunjaya,[31] show some resemblance with our sculpture. In both the cases the child is seated on the lap of the mother and touches one of her breasts. But the head of the mother in both the cases does not lean out of affection unlike the figure of the mother of our sculpture. The sculpture from Bhinmal is not refined. The affectionate embrace of the mother depicted in our sculpture is not seen in the other two sculptures.

The figures of the animals, i.e. buffalo, tiger, lion and deer and some other designs noticed at the *adhiṣṭhāna* of the Ghaṇṭākarṇa temple are so lively that their quality is unsurpassed in Assam.[32] Flowers, creepers, animals, birds and serpent designs occurring on a *dvāra-śākhā* from Gāchtal are beautifully executed in a style which recall the art of the Pāla school. In Bāmunī hill, ruins of two large slabs of stone carry the lion-on-the elephant (*Gujasārdūla*) motif, which seems to have stylistic relation with the Pāla school of Bengal. In the Morar Park, Nowgaon, a stone slab is seen having the carving of a *ghaṭa* or *maṅgalakalasa,* flanked by two elephants, which strongly suggests later Gupta influence. Beautifully sculptured stone blocks from Ākāśigāṅgā show designs, as Ramacandran thinks, resembling the style of the Chālukyan art.[33] He further says that stone fragments from Gosāijuri showing *yavaṇikā* and other designs recall in shape and sculpture the art of South India, and even Ceylon.[34] We have already said that chālukyan architecture and art had no influence over the art of Kāmarūpa. It is to be remembered there were some common architectural sculptural motifs in Indian art and architecture. The South Indian and Ceylonese art had also nothing to do with old Assamese art which was the product of the eastern Indian mediaeval school.

As in the fields of architecture and sculpture, in the field of iconography also, we find a similar picture. The image of Gaṅgā and Yamunā of the Daparvatīā *dvāra* are no doubt high in merit. They are the products of the Sārnāth school of art that flourished in the Gupta period, as mentioned above. The figures are slim in body structure and have proportionate limbs and elegant postures. In fact, such images of the river goddesses, depicted with the flying goose, are not seen anywhere in India. They have, indeed, enhanced the reputation of the Sārnāth school. The images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā depicted in the *dvāra*, preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta and referred to above resemble, to some extent, our images. Stylistically, it seems, that they belong to a slightly later period than ours. The Gaṅgā and Yamunā figures of Daparvatīā *dvāra* should be the best specimens of river goddesses in India in so far as the modelling is concerned.

The inscribed Vishṇu image from Deopānī possesses some Gupta characteristic features, mixed with local tribal (Mongoloid) trait. It can be compared with a late Gupta image of the deities, preserved in the Rangpur Sāhitya Sabhā[35] Museum (now in Bangladesh). A similar image is also found in the Pāla art, for instance, the image of Vishṇu, preserved in the Rājashāhi Museum,[36] bears the same style and features. However, a slight differenee is marked. The facial appearance of the image from Deopānī depicts Mongolian features. In the same locality there are some other images which also have the same peculiar feature. It shows that these images have the late Gupta or early Pāla characteristic features, and at the same time, possess some local peculiar characteristic traits, affiliated to the Mongolian culture. However, in Bengal also certain sculptures are found which bear Mongolian features. Majumdar says that in some specimens of art from Bengal there is marked Mongoloid element which must have been due to ethnic infiltrations through the North-east.[37] This element certainly passed to Bengal from Assam. Another important solitary icon of Vishṇu (appendix) was discovered at Dudhnoi (Fig. 28) and is removed to the Assam State Museum. Sculptured in pre-Pāla styles this icon shows Vishṇu, flanked by his *āyudhapuruṣas* in the *samapādasṭhānaka* attitude. Similar icons of the deity have been reported in some places in Bangladesh, west Bengal, Bihar and some other regions too.

The carving of the figure of Venugopāla in the western *toraṇa* of the Kāmākhyā temple recalls the decorative details of Gupta and pallava art, as remarked by Ramacandran.[38] However, we do not see any Pallava trait in this figure of the deity. One *chādāna* slab from Deopānī contains the figure of a Vidyādhara within the said vessel of a *padma*, showing close resemblance to Gupta and Pāla sculptures. The facial expression is local, while the decorative and anatomical details of the figure recall the late Gupta and the Pāla style, according to Ramacandran.[39] Ramacandran is right in making such a comment that the late Gupta and the Pāla art style had a great influence over the mediaeval sculpture of Assam.

There are many images, belonging to A.D. 11th-12th century in Assam. The majority of them represent Vishṇu and Sūrya. All of them are quite similar to the sculptures of the Pāla school of the Sena period. They have long pointed and decorated śilāpaṭṭa. All of them are slim in the body shape, wear *paridhāna* of thin fabric, and profusely ornamented. The sculptures of Assam, belonging to an early period, *i.e.* the 9th-10th century or the Pāla rule in Bengal and Bihar, are not profusely ornamented, nor they have sharp pointed *śilāpaṭṭa* or elaborate decoration on it. It may be noted that the Senas were foreign people to Bengal. They came to Bengal from the south by the middle of the 11th century. It is quite likely that some of the decorative elements or features of their art were borrowed from Kanarese art (Hoyśala art) which is famous for lavish ornamentation. The Sena artists did not disturb the Pāla school of art. They only improved it and made it more ornamental. This art elements from Bengal entered Assam and that is why most of the sculpture belonging to the 11th-12th century are carved in the style of the Sena art. There are certain images in Assam which are strikingly similar to the images of the Sena art and even the minute iconographic details of a few images from the Brahmaputra Valley tally with those of the images of Bengal of that period.

Icons of Sūrya are found along with the images of Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva, at Cole Park, Tezpur and Mahāmāyāthān, in the Kārbi-Ānlong district. It shows that the Sun god was equal in popularity as Vishṇu, Śiva and Brahmā. The *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* gives such provision for Sūrya. Quadruplicate images, combining in one body Śiva, Vishṇu, Brahmā and Sūrya, have been found in Northern India.[40] The opinion of Sivaramamurti[41] regarding the execution of a figure of Naṭarāja on the back of the *vāhana* of the deity in eastern India seems to be not very correct. Most of the images of Naṭarāja from Assam show the deity in the dancing pose on the *vāhana*. This feature is commonly found in the Naṭarāja images from Bengal and Orissa also. But the four armed Naṭarāja noticed in the ruins at Madan Kāmdev parvat is made to dance on the ground while his *vāhana* stands by the side of the god.

The images of Mahishamardinī represent the same theme, depicted in the images of the deity from other places of India. But the images of the deity from Assam have striking similarity with those of Bengal. The modern clay images of the deity who is the most popular *Śākta* goddess, now being worshiped in eastern India today, are similar to those of the early ones.

The stone image of Indra, preserved in the Assam State Museum, is of particular interest. Because it has a hooded snake above the head of the deity. However, with regard to the identification of the image, there is a little doubt. Here the deity is identified as Indra because of the presence of an elephant as the *vāhana* of the good. But the other features of the image, it seems, are contrary to the iconographic details of the image of Indra. The image of Indra having a snake-hooded canopy over its head is extremely rare in India. The bronze image of Indra, found at the Narakāsur hill, is unique. Though the *ādhāra* and the *prabhāvalī*, with a *chatra*, are arranged in this image in the style of the Pāla bronze sculpture, yet, as far our knowledge goes, this type of Indra image, possessing rare workmanship has not been found anywhere else in India. The image of the deity from Chidambaram[42] offers similarity to ours only in the sitting posture, other features of that image are quite different from those of the image from Narakāsur hill, and that image is carved on stone and is inferior in beauty to ours. Likewise, the image of Manasā from Śilghāt, is now in the Assam State Museum of special interest. Because, Manasā image having Nāgendra (meaning elephant) *vāhana*, is extremely rare in India. To our knowledge, this is the only instance of Manasā image in India having an elephant as the *vāhana* of the deity.

Panels of the Vishṇu *avatāra* are found in some places of Assam. They are found, sculptured commonly on long slabs of stone, and were, on imitiation, possibly employed as *dvāra-śākhās*. The style of execution of these panels seems to be peculiar. A few Narasiṁha images have been noticed. Two of them are quite peculiar because of the *ṣṭhānaka* attitude of the deity. In each case, the deity is made to stand only on one leg, the other being shown horizontally touching the other leg at the knee level. This singularity is certainly remarkable. All these works of art and some other images from Assam offer certainly an addition to the art of India as a whole.

The study of these outstanding art specimens or comparable specimens, though not outstanding, shows that the fine art of Assam tended to be closer to the art of the Guptas, the Pālas and the Senas. This intercourse was possible because of the geographical factors. Dikshit remarks that 'the affinity of Assamese art should seem to lie more with the sculptures of Bihar and Orissa than with the contemporary Pāla art of Bengal.[43] He is supported by B K. Barua[44] and P.C. Choudhury.[45] But on what basis he has made this remark is not known. We cannot say that the art of old Assam had less affinity with the Pāla school of Bengal. On the other hand, we can guess that the mediaeval Assamese art had less affinity with the Orissan art. The Pāla and the Sena art, indeed, have a good deal of resemblance with the art form of Assam. The Orissan art played a side role. This is very well supported by the geogaphical positions of the states and substantiated by our comparative study. In fact, in a broad sense the art of Assam, Bengal, East Bihar and Orissa belongs to one school. Rao[46] has rightly said that the fourth school of Indian art is chiefly represented by the sculpture of Bengal, Orissa and Assam. Therefore, Kataki's theory that Assam had her own school of sculpture, *i.e.* The Kāmarūpa school of sculpture, is not tenable.[47] However, we can definitly say that a popular or peculiar art style, sometimes in combination with the classical eastern Indian style, did develop in Kāmarūpa. This is well evidenced by the stone sculptures from Deopani, the stone sculpture on either side of the western *toraṇa* at Kāmākhyā, and the medallions from the Narakāsur hill. These medallions represent the folk art tradition that existed in A.D. 9th-10th century in Kāmarūpa. This folk art tradition has no affiliation with the classical art school which was popular throughout eastern India in that period. Moreover, slight regional variations in the art of the classical school are also noticed. For instance, the physiognomy of a sculpture from Sibsagar is different from that of Dabakā or Numalīgarh. The sculptures from Mālinīthān may slightly differ from the sculpture from Guwahati. It does not mean that the pre-Āhom sculptures from Guwahati and Mālinithān belongs to two separate schools. Kramrisch has rightly remarked that like plasticity and naturalism, dynamic characteristics, influenced by various racial factors determined the art history of India as a whole.[48] Dikshit has said that another current of influence flew from mid-India to Assam to mould the art of this region.[49] It seems that his view is correct because, some of our sculptures bear Gupta characteristic features and some have similarity with those of khajurāho, the art centre of the Chandelas. There was a regular route for communication from Assam to mid-India. Banerji has also rightly remarked that "the mediaeval architecture and plastic art of Assam were closely related to the general architecture and art of Northern India.[50]

The paucity of valuable art specimens datable to early Āhom regime, compared to those of the preceding centuries, specially, three centuries, reveals, in a striking manner, almost a complete break with the tradition of the past, such as we can dimly perceive also in other spheres of culture and civilization of Assam, as in Bengal. Though the Āhoms soon became Hindus and tried to maintain the old tradition of Assam, yet the artists, patronised by the rulers, could not be art masters, probably, because of their lack of knowledge in Sanskrit, which was the prominent language of Śilpa-Śāstra and Vāstu-Śāstra. One can easily differentiate the archaeological objects, produced in the Āhom and Koch regimes, from the works of art of the preceding periods. The same thing happened to the art tradition of Bengal after A.D. 12th century.

It has been observed that many ruined temple sites include articles, belonging to different periods of history. Almost all the sites of archaeological interest in Assam present combined motifs and workmanship, that were characteristic of the pre-Āhom as well as the Āhom-Koch period. For instance, the Kāmākhyā temple[52] is not the product of the artists of one period. Here we find objects, belonging to a period from *c.* 6th century (or Gupta period) to *c.* A.D. 18th century and so also are the Piṅgaleśvara ruins. Sectarian jealousy, as is proved by the archaeological objects, did not prevail much amongst the adherents of different sects in Assam. Relegious tolerance was very much in the minds of the people. It is because of this tradition that even to-day also people belonging to different religious needs and faith live together amicably.

That the pre-Āhom Kings of Kāmrūpa had their coins is proved by the discovery of the coins at Dhulāpādung. Although the *cowrie* was in circulation in Bengal and Assam in the period, yet coins must have also been used by the traders of Kāmarūpa side by side with the farmer.

From the scattered archaeological objects of various types it is proved that Guwahati was an important city in the mediaeval period in Eastern India. There were a good number of temples and other works of architectural construction. The huge stone *staṁbhas* lying on the road at Āmbāsī and inside the Guwahati Medical College campus show that these architectural pieces were either employed in some huge temples or in some *prāsādas* in the pre-Āhom period. The river *Brahmaputra* must have played an important role in providing a riverine route for communications between Assam and the rest of the country. This river must have facilitated the growth of the old Guwahati city, which can be identified with Prāgjyotishpura, the ancient city of the east, However, further evidence will be necessary to confirm this identification. Hārupeshvar, of the inscription of Vanamāla can be identified with Tezpur, another town of Assam touched by the mighty Brahmaputra. The other capital, Śri Durjja, as mentioned in some inscription, is yet to be identified properly. Unless we get proper inscriptional evidence, it is hazardous to make any comment in this regard.

To sum up, in the pre-historic period, Assam witnessed the movements of various strains, mostly from further east, carrying the Mongolian and some other non-Aryan cultures to the province. From Assam the Monoglian culture spread even to Bengal where the Mongoloid element influenced some art pieces.[52] In the early Christian centuries she imported the Aryan culture. Though she borrowed some noble ideas of Indian culture from her neighbouring regions in India, she did make some original contribute to the culture of India as a whole.

Saktism and Tāntrism, which were supposed to have developed in Bengal and Assam, are additions to the Indian religious system. The spread of the Monogolian culture to Bengal is also a notable contribution. Some of the art pieces having non-Ayan or Mongolian infulence and some work of art of rare beauty from this State definitely have enriched the treasure of Indian art.

The Brahmaputra valley thus served as an easternmost out-post of Indian civilization. But, at the same time, it maintained relations with foreign countries like Burma, Bhutan, Nepal and Tibet, the countries sharing common frontiers with Eastern India. Never the less, its art and architecture, as well as other objects of culture of the period in question were mainly of Indian origin and inspiration. It was and is, indeed, India's sentinel in the eastern horizon.

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1. Sarma, H.C. *op. cit.*

1a. Recently a few neoliths have been found on a mound near Beltola Bazar, Guwahati by Sri Neelpavan Barua, Guwahati. Now these are in his custody.

1b. Sarma, T.C., "*Researches on the Pre-historic Archaeology of the Assam*", *J.A.S.S.*, Vol. IX, 1966, p. 9.

2. Allchin, "*The Neolithic Stone Industry of the Santal Parganas*", *B.S.O.A.S.*, Vol. XXV, Pt. 2, pp. 306-30. Also T.C. Sarma, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

3. Sarma, T.C., *op. cit.*, p. 9.

4. *J.W.A.S.*, Vol. 39, No. 6, pp. 181-201. Also, T.C. Sarma, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

5. Majumdar, R.C., *op. cit.*, p. 565. Prof. P.K. Bhattacharya, Department of History, North Bengal University told me that a few Gupta coins had been discovered in some place of North Bengal bordering Assam State.

6. *Op. cit.*, p. 198.

7. *Ibid.*

7a. Sirkar D.C., *Money in pre-Āhom Assam and its neighbourhood*" *Procgs. NSI, Shillong*, 1977 (to be published).

7b. *Ibid.*

7c. *Ibid.*

7d. *Prākash* (an Assamese monthly), April, 1977, pp. 45-46.

7e. *Op. cit.*, p. 127.

7f. '*Textile Industry in Ancient India*, *JBORS*, June, 1917.

7g. *JARS*, Vol. VII, No. 3, pp. 77-81.

8. *Op. cit.*, p 416.

9. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 404-5.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, p. 400.

11a. *E.I.*, *XXX*I, pp. 67-69.

12. Majumdar, R.C. *op. cit.*, p. 401.

12a. Bhattacharya, P., *op. cit.* p. 145 and Plate facing p. 140

13. It is believed by a section of people that this court poet of Lakshmana-Sena belonged to Kendubilvam, a village in the district Birbhum in Bengal. A 'mela' (festival) is held every year in the village in his honour. But there is no corroborative evidence to show that he was born there. Now a claim has been made that he was a native of modern Orissa. But this view is also not substantiated by evidence.

13a. *J.R.A.S.* 1920, p. 1153.

14. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, Chap. 39, V. 14 and Chap. 42, V. 9.

15. *Op. cit.*, p. 419.

16. Chutia, D., "Kālikā-Purānar Racanākāl" *A.S.S.P.*, 32nd year No. 2, p. 44. P.K. Gode has dated *Kālikāpurāṇa* to A.D. 10th century See, *P.K. Gode Comm. Volume*, Poona, 1960, pp. 1-18.

16a. *Svayaṁpradhānamūrtis* of these deities are also found else where in India.

16b. Barua, B.K., *op. cit.*, p. 155.

17. Majumdar, R.C., *op. cit.*, pp. 408; also N.K. Bhattasali *op. cit.*, p. 77.

18. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 429.

19. *Prakāsh*, April, 1977, pp. 45-46.

20. Barua K.L., P.D. Choudhury and others plead that Buddhism flourished in Kāmarūpa. All these scholars on the basis of certain literary sources, both foreign and indigenous, say that Vajrayāna or Tantrik-Buddhism flourished in Assam. B.K. Barua says that the beliefs which were under the names of Vajrāyāna and Mantrayāna and which grew up as a result of fusion of Hinduism and Buddhism, some scholars maintain, has their birth in Assam''. But we cannot say that Buddhism in its full capacity flourished in Assam, as we do not have concrete archaeological evidence in this connection up to the present time.

20a. For the views of the above scholars see, Barua K.L., *op. cit.*, pp. 100-104, Choudhury P.C., *op. cit.*, pp. 399-406 & 422-427, Barua B.K., *op. cit.*, p. 161-164 & 199.

21. *Adhyana Paricaya*, Saikia, N. (Ed.) Asam Sahitya Sabhā, 1978 pp. 161-165; also J.*A.R*.S. vol. XXVI, 1981-82, pp. 12-26.

22. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 119-20 and 1929-30, pp. 45-46.

22a. *Ibid.* 1924-25, pp. 100-101.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.* pp. 90f.

25. *Ibid.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.

26. See *Rūpam*, No. 37, p. 118, No. 43.

26a. *B.D.C.R.I.*, Vol. II, p. 219.

27. Das Gupta, C.E., *op. cit.*, pp. 236-237.

28. *The Hindu Temple*, 1946. pl. LXVIII.

28a. D. Desai has not illustrated any such scene in her *Erotic Sculpture of India*, 1975, New Delhi.

29. *J.A.R.S.*, Vol. VIII, p. 24.

30. Sculptures from Samalajli and Roda, Spl. Vol. of *B.B.M.P.G.* Vol. XIII, Fig. 22.

31. *Western Indian Art*, Spl. No. *JISOA.*, 1965, Pl XXXIII, Fig. 8; also see Fig. 7.

32. *ARAS.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.

33. *Ibid.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *MASI*, 1929-30, Pl. XXXVI.

36. *Rūpam*, No. 37, p. 108. Fig. 2.

37. *Op. cit.*, p. 546.

38. Ramachandran, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.

39. *Ibid.*,

40. *Rūpam*, No. 37, p. 122.

41. *P.K. Gode Commemoration Vol.*, Poona, 1960, pp. 113f.

42. *I.A.* No. 6, p. 61.

43. Rao, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, PL. CL.

44. *A.R.A.S.I.* 1927-28, pp. 112-113.

45. *Op.cit.*, p. 200.

46. *Op.cit.*, p. 478.

47. *Op.cit.*, Vol. I, pt. 1, Intro. p. 37.

48. J.*A.R.S.I.* Vol. VIII, pp. 38-43. B.N. Mukhejee also wants to speak of a Kāmarūpa school of sculpture on the basis of the style of execution of a few icons from Deopāni, Śrī-Śūrya Pāhār, Mikirāti and four plaqes of bronzes from Kāhilipārā. The icons from these places (excepting Kāhilipārā bronzes) were executed in the late Gupta style in classical formula of course, some of them do bear local traits. But we cannot give them a separate school. The bronze plaques bear sculptures having heavy folk influence and they are not executed in classical formula, See, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-27.

49. *Indian sculpture*, pi 25.

50. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1927-28, pp. 112-113.

51. *Ibid.*, 1924-25, p. 94.

52. *J.A.R.S.I.*, Vol. XXVI 1981-82, pp. 46-52.

Appendices

APPENDIX I

Ruins of Mālinīthān

Mālinīthān is located only one kilometre east of Likābāli, a small place in the North Lakhimpur district of Assam, boardering Arunachal Pradesh. Mālinīthān which have yielded important ruins of some temples is included in Arunachal Pradesh. Likābāli is situated in the plains, while Mālinīthān ruins are on the slope of the hill. In fact Mālinīthan occupies a position where the hills descend into the plains.[1]

L.N. Chakravorty, the then Director of Research Department of Arunachal Pradesh was the first to make a serious effort to expose the ruins as early as 1968. In the subsequent years also he excavated the mound at the place where the ruins where lying scattered under the earth and exposed them. During his course of action over one hundred carved images of various deities belonging to Hindu pantheon, dancing *yakṣas*, sculptured panels, animal motifs of bull, lion, elephant, sculptured pieces bearing geometrical and floral designs exclusively used for decoration were found.[2] All these carved pieces of stone were the result of the work of two phases.

The third phase of excavation by Chakravorty exposed the plinth of a stone temple in the south-east corner of the mound where a Ganesh temples is said to have existed. The digging here exposed a beautiful stone image of Indra and a exquisite image of Kārtikeya in addition to the four motifs of Gaja-vyāla on the four corners of the ruined temple of which the plinth has been unearthed. The plinth of this ruined temple will give a clear idea about the style of the plinth of a Pre-Ahom temple of Assam. It is eight feet in height. The stone slabs used here are *in situ*, although nothing is left as far as the *Śikhara* and other super structures are concerned.

The large number of broken sculptured stones, dressed stone blocks, broken *stambha dvāra-sākha, dvāra śirapaṭṭi* which are lying all over the mound lead us to infer that at the place there must have been more than one temple. Rather we should say that there must have been a temple complex enshrining various deities. The presiding deity of the place, which is being regularly worshipped by the local people is Mahiṣāsuramardinī. This medium sized image is broken (?); later it was restored into its original position by B. Barua the then Political Officer.[3] "Mālinī is a name of Durgā (Mahiṣamardinī). So the place is named after "Mālinī." "Thān" means a place of worship. As the major portion of the image of the deity is covered with cloth, details cannot be seen. However, it can be made out that it is a ten armed figure fighting with the Mahishasura in the conventional posture.

Amongst other finds the images of Sūrya, Indra, Ganeśa and Kārtikeya are worth mentioning. The image of Sūrya is carved very beautifully on a block of stone. The *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image is beautifully decorated. The deity is made to hold two lotuses in the conventional way. This *sthānaka* figure of the deity is attended by his consorts. Below the pedestal the chariot drawn by seven horses are depicted. Unfortunately, the right upper portion of the *śilāpaṭṭa* and the face of the deity are broken and gone.

Indra is seated on his vehicle *Airāvat* in *Mahārājaīlāsana*. The deity is two armed. The *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image is not very pointed. The god holds a *vajra* with his right hand. The palm of the left hand is, it appears, kept behind the waist of the god. The beautiful *svayampradhāna* image of Gaṇapati is in dancing posture. The god holds in his four hands the usual *āyudhas*. The *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image is pointed but not decorated like the former. The image of Kārtikeya is sadly multilated. The head of the deity plus the upper part of the *śilāpaṭṭa* are broken off. The deity is made to sit on its *vahana* in the *mahārājalīlāsana* posture. The right arm of the deity is totally lost, while the left hand is seen holding a bird (*Kukkuta*?).

The ruins have yielded a number of erotic sculpture as seen in other ruins of the Brahmaputra valley.

The study of the ruins at Mālinīthān leads us to conclude that (a) there was a temple complex at the site, (b) the temples were stone built and brick was totally absent in the construction of the structures, (c) the presiding deity of the temple complex was perhaps Durgā or Mahishamardinī but Śaivism had also its prominence and (d) Sūrya and Indra must have been treated as subordinate deities. Further, we support the views of Chakravorty who is of the opinion that Mālinīthān remains belonging to a group of "temples do not also seem to be of the same age as the relics differ from crudity to excellence in artistic conceptions and accomplishment."[4] The style of the sculptures with this place has close resemblence (with minor variation) with the sculptures of other parts of the Brahmaputra valley.

Chakravorty's view that they bear traits of Hoysala style is not justified.[5] Stylistically they may be placed in A.D., 13th-14th century tentatively. But they are sculptured in pre-Ahom or Pāla style and it has no relation with Ahom art. Thus, Mālinīthan though now is included in Arunachal Pradesh, yet it stands as the sentinel of Hindu culture of the Brahmaputra valley to-day as it did in A.D. 13th-14th century.

REFERENCES

1. L.N. Charkravorty, *Mālinīthān*, Directorate of Reserch, A.P. Shillong.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Op. cit.*
5. *Op. cit.*

APPENDIX II

Madan-Kamdev : A Treasure-House of Ancient Assam

Five kilometres south east of Bāihātā Chāriali in Kāmarūpa district lies Madan-Kāmdev, situated on a hilly tract of about five hundred metres. Madan-Kāmdev derives its name from the ruins discovered of the *garbhagriha* (sanctum. sanctorum) of a mediaevel temple housing a large stone image of Umā-Maheśwara in *āliṅgana* posture. Till the winter of 1976 the sanctuary consisted of a small mound, littered all around with half-hidden chiselled stone blocks and thickets, roofed with an open time-weathered, shed built of CI sheets on wooden posts. Canopied with the thickly woven branches of mango-groves the spot was dark and dank.

When a salvage operation was started in the first quarter of 1977, the staff that encamped there were daily frightened after dusk by the roar of man-eater tigers from the neighbouring hills. They resorted to bursting crakers and lighting campfires to scare wild animals away, though not always with success. The operation, however, conclusively proved the archaeological importance of the spot and considering its rare backdrop of natural beauty, a scheme was chalked out for tourist and general attraction.

In Retrospect :

It is possible that when Captain Dalton writing in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1855 mentioned the existence of the ruins of not less than 18 temples not far from the famous Silsako (a historical stone bridge which collapsed in the great earthquake of 1897) near Sangsari, he was actually referring to Madan-Kamdev.

Eighty eight year later in 1943, Tarani Kanta Sarma, an Instructor of Basic Education, was to bring to the notice of the scholarly world, the immense archaeological importance of the area through an article in the *Journal of the Assam Reseārch Society*. In his second article in 1949 in the Journal about the same area, the author tried to evaluate its historical significance.

Though the main objective of the article was to identify this area as the place where the invading troups of the first-ever Mohammadan campaign to Assam, as early as 1206, took shelter after being intercepted by the Kāmarūpa army (as mentioned by the 13th century Muslim historian Minhaj in his *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*), it made passing remarks at the existence of several spots containing visual evidence of archaeological remains.

The span of time between 1949 and 1976 was a period of indifference and inaction when most of the stray sculptures in the jungle ruins of Madan-Kāmdev were reported to be stolen or shifted either by curio-hunters or by religious minded villagers from far and near who wanted to sanctify their *Manikuts* and *Namghars* with these age-old images. It appears strange that such a treasure house of antiquities not far-off from Guwahati could escape the notice of the authorities and left neglected for rampage and pilferage at a time when Museums and Research Societies were receiving increased attention.

The reconnoitre of the area has proved that most of the stone edifices there have already been disturbed to the foundation level and the carved components removed leaving only the undressed coremasonry of the plinth intact. Thus the area which preserved the largest concentration of archaeological wealth in the State for several centuries was left devastated and pilfered over the last few decades.

The First Exposition :

The Directorate of Archaeology, Assam, took up its first venture at Madan-Kāmdev in the first quarter at 1977. Initially a small area adjacent to the Madan-Kāmdev temple was selected for exposition. The completion of a season's work resulted in the discovery of a score of images as also a few structural components of the temple. The size and the nature of objects unearthed showed that they mostly belong to the upper part of the outer wall plus the *Śikhara* of the temple. The images consisted of Sūrya, Ganesh and Vidyādhāras, while the structural components comprised parts of niches, cruci form pillar-capitals, decorative objects and moulded blocks.

The most interesting ones exposed there were three monolithic models of a complete temple in the north Indian style.

Measuring roughly one metre in hight these models bear all the vertical features of a temple including carvings. Known in Indological terminology as *aṅgaśikhara*, these models were initially used to decorate the base line of the dome of the temple. The other components worth-mentioning were half of a huge circular slab with embroidered rim and wedge shaped pieces both of which formed part of the pinnacle of a temple. The spot from which these objects were salvaged show that all of them belonged to the adjacent Madan-Kāmdev temple. The existence of almost all the parts from the pinnacle of a temple here show that while collapsing the top of the former Madan-Kāmdev temple toppled towards the north. The cause must have been a natural one and in all probability was due to an earth quake.

The above operation also exposed bricks of early style as also a massive door sill embossed with the *Kalpavriksha* motif along with a heavy image pedestal with recesses and salients. It is reasonable to surmise that the area to the north of the Madan-Kāmdev temple contained a brick temple with stones used for its doors frame and image pedestals.

While the above exposition was in progress the thick jungle to the north east of the Madan-Kāmdev temple gave clues to the existence of more ruins. In addition to this, the area around the Madan-Kāmdev temple along with its outer profile needed extensive exposition. It was, therefore, decided to suspend the work temporarily so that a comprehensive scheme of exposition, excavation or improvement here should be preceded by a full assessment of its archaeological potentiality which would depend upon a thorough survey of the area. It was furthert hought that the survey would be futile if extensive jungle clearance was not undertaken first.

Survey and Aftermath :

In 1981-82 the site was reopened for work with renewed vigour. Ths season's work was started with the compass surveying of the Madan-Kāmdev hill and its neighbouring area ploting in its process all the hills, plains and water courses. The survey was simultaneously accompanied by the clearance of thick and tangled jungles. The work revealed that the area was dotted with more than two dozen temples all now in ruins, of which the five hundred meter long ridge of the Madan-Kāmdev hill alone containing about fifteen structures.

The southern slopes and the low branches to the north of the above hill also contained ruins most of which are bricks. It is also intresting to note that the hill, which starts from the east and ends in a south-west precipice, concentrates more ruins towards its south west end which are primarily in stone-masonry, while those towards the east and on the slopes are not only scattered but are also built of brick masonry. The two nearby hillocks of Jalpeśwar and Narasingha also contain ruins, both of brick and stone.

During the year 1982-83 the area east of the Madan-Kamdev temple was cleared of trees and outgrowths including uprooting a good number of trees. The work also involved removal of refuse and debris which led to the discovery of the stone plinths of two rows of temples, arranged in two parallel rows of three (facing west) and five (facing east) each.

The clearance operation also unearthed four more plinths to the north-east of these rows of temples, all of which appear bigger in stature than the above. A mystery about these temples is that none of them retain anything of its super structure except for two lintels of exquisite workmanship and two door sills embossed with *Kalpavriksha* (The tree of plenty). The year's work consisted of fencing off an area around the Madan Kamdev temple, as also erection of a shed to give shelter to the sculptures lying outside.

The work of 1983-84 was confined to the exposition of the original ground level around the Madan-Kāmdev temple. This involved cutting and uprooting of several mango, bael and coconut trees which necessitated utmost precautions so as not to damage the stone blocks overground or disturb the alignment of the old masonry undergound. The work after its completion not only laid bare the extant external walls of the Madan-Kāmdev temple but also helped in salvaging most of the sculptures which once decorated the outer surface of the complete temple. The surviving portion of the *Pañcharatha* (plan with five recessess) temple proved that this was one of the finest mediaeval temples ever built in the Brahmaputra valley. Dominance of

Śaivite sculptures of an erotic nature conclusively proves that this temple was a centre of Siva worship. The assortment of sculpture found consists of both *Devas* and *Devis*, Vidyādhāras and human figures. Among the divine ones, the six handed Bhairava, four handed God Sivā, Natarāja and Sūrya need special mention. Stylistically the time of construction of this temple can be dated to A.D. 12th century.

The work also exposed the plinth of the *maṇḍapa* of the temple though its south-east portion was completely damaged. That the roof of this square and spacious hall was supported by four massive stone columns could be surmised from markings found on its floor.

In Conclusion :

Madan-Kāmdev holds the prospect of developing into a spot of tremendous appeal. The Directorate of Archaeology has arranged with the Revenue Department to prevent any sort of landsettlement there, so that its natural ecology can be maintained. Besides its natural setting, the area is a wild-life habitat including aquatic birds. The Directorate of Archaeology has a lot to do by way of exposition and preservation.

A comprehensive scheme has already been prepared to develop this entire area in co-operation with such government departments as P.W.D., Tourism, Fisheries, Public Health. Forest Engineering, and ASEB. It is hoped that the scheme, when materialises, will make Madan-Kāmadev the finest attraction for tourists and travellers alike who will have a glimpse of our rich heritage in a rare back-drop of natural setting.

I visited the site for the first time in 1968 after getting information from the short article by Tarini Kanta Sarma published in the *Journal of the Assam Research Society* in 1949. At that time the Directorate of Archaeology, Assam did take up any work in the site. So much of ruins were also not seen over the earth. Only the huge image of Umā-Maheśvara was kept under a shed and it was held in worship. Some pieces of carved big size images were also lying at the site. In the early seventies also I visited the site. Later I had a talk with my colleague Dr. P.C. Sarma, Exploration Officer, Directorate of Archaeology to protect the pre-Āhom ruins in Assam in addition to the temples belonging to the Āhom period.

Dr. Sarma took up work in that line and after the completion of the work at Pingalesvar he concentrated at Madan Kāmdev (which is wrongly named) ruins. Now he has been able to expose ruins of a number of temples at the site about which earlier I had no idea. The number of icons, sculptures broken architectural pieces is so big that he can write a monograph on the site. Mr. G.N. Bhuyan, Director of Archaeology, Assam and his colleague Dr. P.C. Sarma deserve praise for the work. I am also grateful to Dr. Sarma for allowing me to reprint his Published article on the ruins in question.

APPENDIX III

A Note of The Kaliyābor Copper Plates of Vanamālavarmadeva.

About a couple of months back, a set of three copper plates, measuring 32 cm × 20 cm and weighing about 5 kg. 3000 gm, bound together by a copper ring with a ladle-shaped seal containing the fore parts of an elephant, being the royal insignia of the early Kāmarūpa ruling families and the legend "*-swasti śrīmān-prāgjyotishādhipānvayo-mahārājādhirāja śri-vanamālavarmadevah*", has been found by chance by Sri Nirmal Chandra Bora, a cultivator of village Dighali while tilling his land. The place is is about 1½ Kilometres to the east of the historic Chāmdharāgaḍh in the Kaliyābor circle, District Nowgaon. Sri Bora while tilling his land suddenly came upon the piece. The plates were kept in the office of the Kaliyābor branch of the Assam Sāhitya Sobhā for sometime and was later on handed over to the Assam State Museum authorities by Sri Bora in a public function.

The plates which are inscribed are found to be a land grant charter issued by the king, Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Vanamālavarmadeva, son and successor of Śri Harjjaravarmadeva, of the royal house of Sālastambha, who ruled the ancient kingdom of Kāmarūpa with their seat of administration at Hatadarpesvara. Vanamālavarmadeva is generally ascribed to A.D. 835-865 A.D. The writing covers the inner sides of the first and the third plates and both sides of the middle plate. There are a total of 63 lines of writing, i.e. 17 lines each in the first three pages and 12 lines in the 4th page.

The text of the charter has two sections, i.e. the eulogical and the operative sections. The eulogical section of the text, generally agree with the texts of the eulogical parts of the king's earlier two land grant charters, viz. the Tezpur Copper Plate Grant and the Parvatiyā Copper Plate Grant, with minor differences, the details of which are being worked out. The operative part records the grant by the king of a plot of land equivalent to a Khaṇḍalaka of land in the Pūrjjikā-Pradeśa, situated in the Dakshiṇakūla to six Brahmanas, viz. (1) Bhaṭṭa Gallahara, (2) Bhaṭṭa Gayahara, (3) Bhaṭṭa Yaśohara (4) Bhaṭṭa Talahara, (5) Caṇḍamāna and (6) Kātyāyana. While the first four are stated to be brothers being the offsprings of Jātaveda, born in the *Kausikya-gotra*, the relationship of the last two to each other or with the former are not mentioned. Again, while the first five are alloted 2 parts of land each, the last one is alloted only one part. Here the actual measure of land indicated by *aṅgśa* is not certain.

APPENDIX IV

Some Newly Collected Icons for the Assam State Musenm

Two icons from Rangāgorā Tea Estate : A few years back, the Assam State Museum authority, on receipt of the information from Sri Pradip Singh, the then Sub-Divisional Officer, Tinsukhia, collected two valuable icons (stone) from the residence of the Superintendent of the Rāngā-gorā Tca Estate near Tinsukiā.

The first one (34 cm × 23 cm) represents a female deity. Here the deity is made to sit in *utkaṭikāsana*. Both the hands of the deity rest on the respective knees. The right hand of the deity hold an *akshamālā*, with the left holds a *ghaṭa*. Looking at the almost closed eyes of the deity and the siting posture, we are inclined to say that the deity is in *dhyāna* (doing penance). The *jaṭā* of the deity is well done. The *upabīta* worn by the deity is also clearly visible. The left breast of the deity is slightly damaged. The treatment of the *jata*, the eyes, the noes, the lips etc. lead us to think that it bears all the characteristic features of an early mediaeval sculpture which may be assigned to *c*. A.D. 6th/7th century. The *vāhana* of the deity is not shown in this icon. The deity represents Pārvati in *pañchatapa*.

Trivedi has illustrated quite a few icons of Pārvatī. Not a single icon of the goddess are strikingly similar to ours. However, he has illustrated an image of the deity (Pl. II) from cave No. 21, Elora. Here the deity is shown as two armed, holding an *akshamālā* and a *ghaṭa* as in our case. The antelope skin (*mrigacarma*) is seen on the left arm of image of the deity, as in our image. As the image from Elora is two armed like our image, Trivedi has rightly placed it in *c*. 600 A.D. He has illustrated another, image of the goddess *Pārvati*, from Batesara, M.P. Here the deity is made to sit in *utkaṭikāsana* like our image. However, unlike ours, the knees of the deity tide round with a *yogapaṭṭa*. The deity is shown here as four armed, while our image is two armed. In both the cases the deity is shown in meditating posture. Bhattasali, Banerjea, and Rao, have not described such an image of *Pārvati*.

The second image (31 cm × 16 cm) represents a male deity in hybrid form. Below the neck the image represents a male human figure, while above the neck it represents a goat. With two horns which are mutilated the deity is seated in *ardhapariyaṅkāsana*(?) attitude, keeping the right leg on the seat, while the left leg is in upright position. The style of sitting is also similar to some extent to *Mahārājalīlāsana*. The deity has two arms. He holds an indistinct object in his right hand. Possibly the object can be identified as *Kartari* (Knife). The object held in his left hand may be a small pot. The deity is pot-bellied. The image may be identified with Daksha. Image of Daksha, however, is rare. Banerjee, Rao, Gupta and Mahajan and Bhattasali have not described such an image of Daksha. We have another image of Daksha in the Assam State Museum which is being described in the following pages.

Both these two sculptures were executed each on a boulder. These two icons can easily be dated to early mediaeval period i.e. *c.* 600 or so. The discovery of these two sculptures in the Rāngāgorā Tea Estate amply proves that during the pre-Ahom period, the sankrit speaking people bearing Aryan culture reached the eastern most part of Assam.

Icons from Barpathar : In 1984, five icons were collected from Barpathar. All the images were sculptured each on a stone boulder. The first one is an image of Vishṇu (46 cm × 16 cm). Here the deity is shown in *samapādasthānaka* attitude. The left upper and lower hands hold *padma* and *śaṅkha* respectively, while the right upper and lower hands are made to hold *śaṅkha* and *gadā* respectively. The *āyudha* of the lower hands are placed on the *adhishthāna* of the deity, while the hands are made to touch them. The *kirīṭamukuṭa* and the vanamālā worn by the deity are quite prominently seen. Garuḍa is not shown in this icon. The style of the execution of this image is quite similar to those of Vishṇu images from Deoṛani, preserved in the Assam State Museum, Mikirati and other places bearing the late Gupta and early Pāla features. An exactly similar images of the deity is noticed in the office of the Registering Officer, Deptt. of Archaeology, Jorhat. A similar image of Vishṇu is in the residence of Mr. Neel Madhab Sen, Barpathar. Recently, a similar image was discovered in a place, within Kārbi Āṅglong District, which is quite near to Barpathar. The image is being worshipped by the local people. The present image of our discussion was collected from the residence of Mr. Ramakanta Singh, Barpathar. He found two images of Vishṇu of the same style, one of which has been installed in his private temple.

The second image represents Cāmuṇḍā. (61 cm × 19.6 cm) The sculptor could portray all the uncanny features of the goddess. The exposed ribs of the emaciated figure are clearly visible. The face of the deity looks terrible. The deity is made to sit on a simple *āsana*(?) in *utkaṭikāsana*. The āyudha held in the hands of the goddess are not clear.

The next image represents a seated male figure (51 cm × 18.6 cm). The deity is made to sit in *lalitāsana*. It is a two armed figure like the previous two. The right hand of the god holds an indistinct object, while the left hand holds a *gadā* or a *lakuṭā*. The hair style of the deity is peculiar and it does not resemble a common *jaṭā*. The eyes of the deity appear to be big in the size and so also the lips. The deity is pot-bellied. The precise identity of the deity at the present state of our knowledge is not clear. However, it may be a Śaiva deity.

The fourth image of the god represents Daksha (58 cm × 18.6 cm). The deity is made to sit in *lalitāsana* attitude. The left hand of the god holds an indistinct object while the right hand holds an *aṅkuśa* (?). The head of the god represents a goat having two beautifully carved horns. The difference between this image and the image of Daksha from Rāngāgorā, described in the appropriate place is that the horns of the image from Rāngāgorā are broken, while the horns of the present image are in perfect state of preservation. The Rāngāgorā image holds a *Kartari,* while the present image holds an *aṅkuśa.* However, stylistically the Rāngāgorā image may be placed in an early period than that of the present image.

The last image of the group represents a female figure seated in *utkaṭikāsana* (68 cm × 22 cm). The deity is two-armed. The right hand of the deity holds a fish. The eyes of the goddess appear to be little bulging, the nostrils are open and the lips are big. The hair of the deity is open. The prominent *kuṇḍalas* worn by the figure are touching almost the shoulders. The breasts of the figure are flat. It appear that the present image and the previous image represents two middle aged divinities. The precise identities of the deity is not clear. However, it may represent Vasundhārī. Both the image in question and the previous image bear typical Deopāni styled physiognomy.

All these images from Barpathar stylistically belong to *c.* 8th century. There are some rare images which are lying here and there around Barpathar. They also stylistically belong to the same period. It appears that these sculptures have stylistic relation with the Deopānī images.

Icons From Bijulibārī

Recently a few icons were discovered in Bijulībārī near Sīpājhār in the Darrang district of Assam and they were collected by the Assam State Museum authority. On receipt of an information from Mr. Prem Saran, I.A.S., Deputy Commissioner of Darrang District, regarding the discovery of these objects, I paid a joint visit to the place along with Mr. Saran. Earlier abont these discovery I was told by Prof. Nagen Sarma, Mangaldoi, also.

The discovered objects include two stone icons, two metal icons and a few broken pots and potsherds. All these objects were kept in an open shed of the residence of Mr. Arun Chandra Das of Bījulībārī village. Mr. Das found them while digging for a tank for making fishery in a plot of land just near the National High way. A few stone blocks are also noticed in the site, i.e. in the tank which was not completely dug. It appears that there must have been some small construction in the past. Some systematic excavation in the site may throw some light on the potentiality of the site.

Looking at the objects I told Mr. Saran that they should be removed to the Assam State Museum for better preservation. Subsequently, all the sculptures were removed to the Assam State Museum.

The first object of the group is an icon of Vishṇu. It measures 60 cm × 33 cm. The weight of the object is 32 kg. and 300 grams. The deity is made to stand in *samapādasthānaka* attitude. The four armed deity is made to hold the usual *āyudhas* (clockwise from the upper left hand) *cakra*, *śaṅkha*, *padma* and *gadā*. The head of the deity is crowned wtth *Kirīṭakmukuṭa*. The *vanamālā* and *upavīta* and *Kaṭimekhalā* worn by the deity are clearly shown. The God is flanked by his consorts. However, Sarasvatī and Lakshmī, his consorts, are not shown as holding the usual *āyudhas*. The *silāpaṭṭa* of the sculpture is decorated with the figure of Vidyādhāra and a *Kīrttimukha* at the top. The *śilāpaṭṭa* is pointed. Below the pīṭha *Padmakōshas* are clearly noticed. Stylistically this piece of sculpture belongs to 10th-11th century.[1]

The second object of our discussion is also an icon of Vishṇu. It is a bronze sculpture measuring 12.4 cm × 6.6 cm and weighing 205 gram. Like the first image of the deity, here also the deity is shown in the usual posture i.e., *samapādasthānaka* attitude holding the usual *āyudhas* (clockwise) i e. *gadā*, *cakra*, *śaṅkha* and *padma*. The *kirīṭāmukuṭa*, the *kaṭivastra* and the *vanamālā* worn by the deity are clearly seen. The God is seen flanked by his consorts. Here also the miniature figure of the Goddess Sarasvatī and Lakshmī are not shown as holding the usual *āyudhas*. If Lakshmī's *āyudha* in her right hand can be identified as a *Chowrī* at all, at least Sarasvatī is not shown with her usual *vina*. The *ādhāra* is shown decorated with flame like objects behind the deity. It is pointed.

As in the first case, in the case of the second icon also the Garuḍa, the *vāhana* of Vishnu, is not shown. Both the icons are sculptured with common features and on stylistic consideration they can be dated to 11th/12th century.[2]

The third icon represents some female *śākta* deity. It is a stone sculpture measuring 13.7 cm × 6.7 cm and weighing 350 gram. The deity is shown as standing almost in *ālidha* attitude on a prostrate human figure. In her four hands the goddess holds clockwise : unidentified object, *kapāla*, *kartarī* and *khaḍga*. The hair tuft of the goddess seems to be rising like the hood of a serpent. The *muṇḍamālā* worn by the goddess is clearly seen. The deity is pot-bellied. Below the prostrate human figure the donor is shown. Above the head of the deity on either side of the tappering *śilapāṭṭa* trace of the figure of Vidyādhara is noticed.

From the style of standing of the deity and wearing the *muṇḍamālā*, it may be taken as an image of *Śakta* deity. The details of the face of the deity is lost. Though the material used is black stone, yet, it is not very hard, as it appears. The present icon has some similarity with the Buddhist images of Mārichī from Ujani, Panditsar and images of Parnasvarī from Nayananda and Vajrayōginī, Bangladesh, illustrated by Bhattasali.[3] But the other details of our image do not tally with those images. The āyudhas held by these Buddhist images are quite different. Unlike our image, they do not stand on prostrate human figure. Neither Rao[4] nor Banerjea[5] has illustrated such an icon. Even Bhattacharya[6] has not illustrated an image exactly similar to our image. Gupta[7] has not noticed an icon of this type and so also Tewari.[8] The local people called it the image of Kālī. The worship of Goddess Kāli is very popular in Assam amongst the *Śāktas*. Kālı is commonly worshipped in Bengal also.

But it is a mater of great surprise that not a single photograph of the Goddess Kālī has been illustrated by all these authorities. Nor they have given in detail the description of an image of Kālī based on iconographic text. The reason is that it is very rare. We have not seen such an image of Kāli belonging to early or mediaeval period. The icon of four armed Kālī with terrible look with a protruding tongue wearing a *muṇḍamālā* and keeping one leg on the chest of Śiva who lies prostrate is worshipped very commonly in eastern India to-day. The goddess is also popularly known as Śyāmā. The image of the deity is made commonly of earth.

But the image of the deity in question unlike the icon of Kālī stands on the prostrate human figure keeping her legs apart. Secondly, the present figure of the deity is pot-bellied, while the figure of Kālī is represented as slim. Unlike the commonly worshipped image of Kālī, the present deity does not have a protruding tongue.

On the other hand, the image of Mārichi, a Buddhist Goddess is four faced. The figure of the deity in question is single faced. The *āyudhas* held by our image are also different from that of Mārichī, illustrated by the scholars referred to above. The figures of Parṇeśvarī illustrated by the same authorities, although pot-bellied, is four faced.

From the above discussion it appears that the present icon cannot be identified with Buddhist deity Mārichī or Parṇeśavarī. It is also not very similar with the image of Kāli commonly worshipped to-day. Further examination, therefore, will be necessary to arrive at a conclusion with regard to the identity of this deity.

The last icon is a miniature two armed female deity (7 cm × 3.4 cm weighing 30 gm) seated crosslegged holding something with both the hands on the lap. It is a bronze sculpture. The deity is sitting on a *padmāsana* in *dvibhaṅga* attitude. The identification of this figure has become difficult. The face of the deity is badly weathered. The only *āyudha* held by both the hands of the deity is not clear. The *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* worn by the deity is to some extent clear. To the left of the deity below a miniature figure, possibly representing the donor, can be traced somehow. Stylistically, this piece of bronze art belongs to the same period, i.e., 10th-11th century.

The discovery of these sculptures shows that the site belongs to the pre-Āhom or pre-Koch period. It is reported that a Vishṇu image (stone) of about the equal size of the first image of our discussion is being worshipped near this site, which is closer to Sipājhār. There are many archaeological sites in the Darrang district which belong to the pre-Koch period. Near the site there is another site of a ruined temple on the side of the National High Way belonging to the pre-Koch period. This shows the pre-Koch culture around 10th century flourished in this part of Assam as in other parts of the Brahmaputra valley.

There were some doubts in the mind of the public of the Sipājhār region with regard to the metal of the small images discovered at the site. Some people tried to mislead the public by saying that all the images were made of gold. But the controversy was set at rest after the publication of a letter by Sri M.C. Das, Retd. Director of Archaeology and Museum, Assam.[9]

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2. According to the *Rupamaṇḍana, Padma-Purāṇa, Dharma-Sindhu, Vriddharahita Smriti* and *Abhilashitārtha Cintāmani* it is the icon of Nārāyana a form of Vishṇu, see Rao *op. cit.* pp. 229-232 and Gupte *op. cit.* p. 95. The *Chaturvarga Chintāmani*, however calls it Hari, see Gupte *op. cit.* p. 95.
3. N.K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical sculptures in Decca Museum*, 1972, Pl. XIII fig (B) and pl. XXIII fig (B).
4. Rao, *op. cit.* see pp 327-400 and also the plates depicting the icons of Devi.
5. J.N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, 1974, see all the plates.
6. B. Bhattacharya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 1968, see all the plates.
7. Gupte. *op. cit.* see all the plates.
8. S.P. Tewari, *Hindu Iconography*, 1979. See all the plates.
9. See *Dainik Asom* (An Assamese daily) published from Guwahati, 15th June, 1984, p. 2.)

APPENDIX V

Āmbāri Sculptures

The Āmbārī archaeological site is located just to the south of Gopināth Bordoloi Road in between the Textile College and Rabindra Bhawan, Guwahati. The area of land between the Textile College and Rabindra Bhawan in which the ruins were discovered was allotted to the Reserved Bank of India. When the Reserved Bank of India authorities started digging for the foundation of the building, the labourers found some images. Knowing the importance of the site the Anthropology Department of Guwahati University and the Directorate of Archaeology and State Museum, Assam, took over the excavation work and found many images. Subsequently, the land was handed over to the Directorate of Archaeology, Assam on public demand. It was in 1969. In .970 Professor H.D. Sankalia visited the site and recommended for further excavation at the site. Accordingly, the site was excavated jointly by the Deccan College, Pune, Guwahati University and Department of Archaeology and State Museums, Assam. The work of excavation was continued till the month of April 1970. The digging done in 1969 was not scientific. During excavation done in 1970-71, the natural soil could not be reached due to sub-soil water.

The excavated materials can be placed into four cultural divisions on the basis of statigraphy. The first phase is represented by copper coins of East India Company while the second phase is represented by glazed ware. The third phase of culture is represented by the sculptures belonging to the time of the post Pāla period (Pāla dynasty of Assam). Before the settlement in the post Pāla period, the site evidenced flood and for this reason the site was for some time abandoned and hence, there was no settlement. The last phase of culture shows some trace of some stone wall (?) belonging to the pre-Pāla period. Because of the sub-soil water problem this object could not be dug out completely.

The discovered images, on the basis of style and size, can be grouped into two. In the group of small images a few images of Vishṇu, Sūrya and Mahishamardinī can be included. The group of the bigest size images is represented by the icons of Vishṇu, Sūrya, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Agni and some Śivaliṅgas. Of the discovered images eight small sized images represent Mahishamardinī. Like the images of Mahishamardinī five small images represent Vishṇu, one of which is found broken at the waist, whose lower part is lost. Three images of Sūrya of the same size has also been found. Some miniature Śivaliṅgas also have been discovered alongwith these sculptures. In addition to these objects a mutilated small image of Gaja-Vyāla carved on a black-basalt is found. Almost all the small sized images of Mahishamardinī measures about 25 cm × 15 cm. All the images of the deity are ten armed. In each case, the deity is made to hold the common *āyudhas* i.e., *khaḍga*, *kheṭaka*, *Bāṇa*, *pāśa*, *dhanu*, *triśūla* etc. The Asura is shown emerging out of the severed body of the buffalo demon of which the head is fallen below. The left foot of the deity is placed on the trunketed body of the buffalo demon, while the right foot is placed on the back of the lion, the *vāhana* of the deity. The *śilāpaṭṭa* is pointed but it is devoid of of ornamentation. The quality of the stone is bad and so the details of the sculpture perhaps could not be executed by the sculptor.

Like the images of Mahishamardinī, the image of Sūrya (about 26 cm × 16 cm) are also quite similar to each other. In each case, Sūrya is depicted as holding two lotuses in the usual way. He is flanked by Daṇḍa and Piṅgala. In two images the depiction of seven horses and in the centre, Aruṇa is noticed. However, Aruṇa is not shown just in front of the legs of the god, as we find in some other cases. If he is wearing a pair of boots, it is not clear. In these cases Sūrya is seen standing on a lotus. In the case of the third image of the deity we see only one horse inside the wheel of the *ratha*, depicted in the pedestal. Here the representation of Aruṇa is also marked absent.

The Vishṇu images (26 cm × 16 cm) are also quite similar to each other. Each of the Vishṇu images are four armed and it holds clockwise ; *Cakra*, *Śaṅkha*, *Padma* and *gadā*. In all the cases the God is made to stand in *samapādasthānaka* attitude. He is flanked by his consorts in the usual way. Below the *pīṭha* of God, Garuḍa is depicted. All the sculptures of this group from Āmbārī bear one and the same style. Their details are not shown because of the smallness of the sculptures and bad quality of stone. The *śilāpaṭṭa* is pointed above. From the style of these sculptures it can be said that though they do not belong to the pre-Āhom period, they do bear the pre-Āhom art tradition.

The Śivaliṅgas found in the site are about 13 cm in height. These miniature Śiva-lingas are carved out of low quality stone.

During the excavation done in 1970-71 a miniature image of a female figure of Manasā canopied by a snake was found. The image is sadly multilated and the lower portion of the sculpture has gone.

There are a good number of big sized images. Of those nine represents Vishṇu, while three represents Sūrya, There is a beautful image of Naṭarāja. We have also an image of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Four images represent Muni. One image shows the figure of Agni. A rectangular stone block depicts a full bloomed lotus. Twelve Śivaliṅgas and four images of Nandī are also in the group.

All the images of Vishṇu are of common nature and they do not have any speciality. An icon of Vishṇu bears a few letters inscribed below the *pīṭha*. The letters read as Mādhava. Another image of the deity bears some letters inscribed in the same way, which reads as Vāmana. The inscribed letters bear the style of 13-14th century. One icon of Sūrya is depicted as four armed. Usually Sūrya is depicted as two armed. In Patna Museum, it is reported, a four armed image of the deity is preserved. *Svayaṁpradhāna* image of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, the two river Goddess are not common. But our river Goddesses are depicted as *Svayaṁpradhānmurtis*, The figures of the Muni along with the miniature figures of their consorts are peculiar for their uncommon style of *jaṭā* and beard. At least this style of turban-like *jaṭā* and the Egyptian like beard are not commonly met with the sculptures of the other parts of India.

In the solitary image of Agni the deity is shown as flanked by his consorts Svāhā and Svadhā. A similar image of Agni from North-Guwahati is being preserved in the Assam State Museum. Śivaliṅga and images of Nandī of the same type are found in other places of Assam also. The most beautiful and important work of art is the huge ten armed image of Naṭarāja dancing on his *vāhana*, flanked by the dwarf figures of Gaṇa and Bhringi. It was exhibited in London in 1983. All these sculptures portray the pre-Āhom style. Some of the big sized images, it appears, show marked deterioration in style. However, it is abundently clear that they do not bear the style of the Āhom sculpture, and hence, the sculptures can be placed in 13-14th century.

A few terracotta sculptures were also discovered at Āmbārī. A sadly mutilated halo terracotta female figure is an attractive piece. The head, legs and arms of the figure are missing. The technique of the preparation of this sculpture is of high order like that of the terracotta images of Gaṅgā and Yamuna from Ahichhatra, now being preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi. But from the point of ornamentation and size, the sculpture in question is quite different from the Ahichhatra sculpture. Another, a torso of dancing figure of which one leg and one arm are missing draw the attention of the scholars. There is also a mutilated image of Gaṇeśa. All these terracotta sculptures definitely belong to Pāla or pre-Pāla period from stylistical consideration.

During excavation a large number of pots and potsherds were found. While determining the period and phase of culture of the site as mentioned above, the style, colour, and size of the various pot and potsherds were taken into consideration. Some brick structural alignments could also be traced at the site. This shows that at the site there must have been some structure of some temple or some building. But this structure should be completely dug out in order to ascertain what it was. The excavated sculptures are being preserved in the Assam State Museum. A few of them are also in the Anthropology Department's Museum of Guwahati University.

Now the question is how and why all these sculptures were found at the site ? Was there any temple ? It is not easy to answer to all these questions at the present stage of our knowledge, since the site is yet to be completely dug out. It is to be noted that the Deghalipukhurī, in front of the Assam State Museum, is not an excavated tank. It was, we have reasons to believe, a channel of the Brahmaputra. This channel must have been connected with the marshy land or the *beel* in Rehabarī area of Guwahati. Through this channel boat could definitely move from the Brahmaputra.

Our conjecture is that since Deghalipukhurī is very near to the archaeological site of Āmbārī, it was possible that stone blocks, bricks and other building materials were brought to the site by boat. The images found at the site were not fixed on the wall of temples. Moreover, we are not sure if there was a temple or some other complex at that site. All the big sized images were found lying in one lair placed horizantally. So, it appears that they must have been, reserved there after they were brought from some other places for onward transmission to temples or they were chiselled here. Therefore, it is likely that the site was a studio where sculptures were prepared or kept for despatching to some other places. Whatever may be the cause of their presence at the site, it is true that the site is quite promising and very important in view of the fact that it has yielded a good number of sculptures. The site is older than the sculptures, because potteries were found below the lair of the sculptures.

It is a well known fact that in majority of the parts of the modern city of Guwahati ruins of the pre-Āhom period and standing temples of Āhom and Koch period are found. In certain area of the city where ever you dig you are bound to find at least some potteries, if not stone sculptures. Guwahati, which is identified as the Prāgjyotīshapura mentioned in the Epics and the Purānas, indeed, is one of the very few ancient cities of India bearing the settlement of the mediaeval and ancient times. The Āmbārī excavation should be completed as early as possible by the concerned authorities.

APPENDIX VI

Some Archaeological Site Near Mangaldoi

On 9th and 10th October 1982 along with Sri N.R. Patgiri, A.C.S. the then Under-Secretary to the Government of Assam, Education Department, Assam, I visited some ruined temples and old tanks of historical value. We were accompanied by Prof. Nagen Sarma, Ex-M.L.A., Mangaldoi College, Mangaldoi. We first visited Kāmākhyā Moth near Lakhimpur ancient tank. The site of the ruined temple shows a standing temple of modern period, in the *garbhagṛha* of which a *Viśva-Padma* curved beautifully on a block of stone has been placed and worshipped by the local people as the deity. This *Viśva-Padma* and other architectural pieces and chisselled stone blocks seen around the modern temple (*Nāmghar*) may be dated around 10th century, if not earlier. This shows that there was a temple belonging to the pre-Āhom period. At this site a slight digging will definitely expose more curved stone blocks of the old temple. It is necessary to arrange for putting a fencing around the site either through the Social Forestry Department or through the Archaeology department, as I think.

The Lakhimpur tank near this ruined temple site is a huge earth-work which was excavated during the period when the temple was erected. It has been now taken up under N.R.E.P. scheme for its development and protection.

Towards a little North of Khairābārī T.E. there lies two old tanks which are called Jor-Pukhurī and which are yet to be taken up under N.R.E.P. Scheme. To a little further North a ruined temple is noticed. The temple which is in complete ruin must have been built around A.D. 10th century or so. The sculptures and architectural broken pieces are lying scattered at the site. A few of them have been dumped in the centre and the local people worship some figures depicted on a lintel placed in the centre of the heap. The *dvāra-śirapaṭṭl* is indeed very beautifully sculptured. It appears, the middle figure on it represents "Sūrya" flanked by Daṇḍa and Piṅgala. A further study will definitely give some clue to the presiding deity of the temple. The site of the ruined temple needs urgent protection. It should be fenced off either by the Archaeology Department or by the Social Forestry Department immediately so that lifting of stone blocks can be prevented.

To further east of this site we saw a trace of another temple and an old tank. Only a few pieces of stone of the old temple and the brickbats lying scattered at the place can be seen. The locality is known as Ganeśpur temple or ṭhān. The old tank and the ruins of the temple needs to be fenced off immediately lest the evidence of this temple is completely wiped out. The ruined temple from stylistic point of view, should date to the same period of pre-Āhom age.

It is learnt that towards further North there is trace of another ruined temple at Bongrung. It is further North of Kramver and Mājulī T.E. Unfortunately, we could not visit the site for want of time.

We visited the Tāmreśwarī temple near Khairābārī and I was surprised to see the ruines of a big temple and small shrines which were in complete ruin. But the *garbhagṛha* of the temple noticed at the site appears to be renovated at a later period, and employed the old chiselled stone blocks there. Looking at the dehalī of this ruined temple it appears that the temple was very big in size. At the site the chiselled stones used in the temple are lying scattered. To the west of the *garbhagṛha* of the main temple across the PWD road, continuation of ruines are noticed. Here a *dvāraśirapaṭṭi* of a shrine shows a figure of "Gaṇeśa" in the middle. Above the figure of Gaṇeśa there is a row of seated cross-legged two-armed figure holding a lotus. To the extreme right to the *śirapaṭṭi* is seen a figure riding on a horse while to the extreme left is seen a miniature figure holding an umbrella. This *dvāraśirapaṭṭi* is very interesting and peculiar from inconographical point of view. The entire area over which the ruins are seen needs to be protected and fenced off immediately. From the stylistic point of view the ruines belongs to 10th Century, if not earlier. It is learnt that Dr. P.C. Sarma, Exploration Officer of this department paid a visit to all these sites and surveyed the entire area. Since Dr. Sarma personally saw these ruins and already examined them carefully, I think it will be possible to take action necessary for the protection of these sites.

We also visited Rājā Pukhurī comprising 140 bighas of land. It is an old big tank which deserved protection. But unfortunately some individual has been encroaching upon the banks of the tank.

Burīnagar Pukhurī, a big old tank has also been visited by us. The Pastiā ancient tank near Hātibandhā has become shallow. There are nine old taks around this region. Rānī Pukhurī is located near Rājā Pukhurī. In fact, Lakhlmpur ancient on Kāmākhyā Moth surrounded by serveral old tanks, such as, Padum Pukhurī, Sāgalī Kaṇḍā, Lilā Gosāi, Mahpānī Pukhurī, Sukhaabarī, etc. The Abhayā Pukhurī is another old tank of which the bed has become shallow and on the bank encroachment is going on. This tank requires immediate protection and the fencing around this tank can be arranged through Social Forestry Department. Thampa Hola is less than one kilometre North of Kalāgīon. There are ruins of pre-Āhom temple. Now the local people has constructed a *Nāmghar* over this. Inside it a *Viśva-padma* used in the super structure of the old temple has been installed as deity by the local people. The chiselled blocks seen at the place easily lead one to think that there existed a temple at the site in the pre-Āhom period.

The Burāgarh is very insteresting. It is a huge earthen fortification, standing like a big square comprising 494 *bighās* of land. Inside the *Garh* or fortification there must have existed some royal administrative centre or it was used as the garrison of army. Further exploration at the place may give us more clues of the utility of this fortification. Sonewārī Phukhurī which is an old tank is located nearby.

All these ruined temple sites and the old tanks show that there must have been a settlement in the pre-Āhom period in this region prior to the advent of the Coch and their settlement. This is also proved that the sculptural style of the archaeological objects found in this area belongs to the pre-Āhom period.

Now I feel that the Government should come with more fund and materials to protect these archaeological and historical objects of our glorious past before they are lost for ever.

The Assam State Museum is in possession of three important images which were collected a few years back. The first is an image of Vishṇu with *āyudhapurushas* from Khārāmedhi pārā, Dudhnoi. The image (Fig. 28) is carved out of a block of sand-stone measuring (27.5 cm × 14 cm). Here the deity is made to stand in *samapādasthānaka* attitude. The deity is flanked by two human figures, one male and the other is female. The lower hands of the deity is seen touching the heads of the figures. The male figure represents *cakra* while the female represents Godā. The *Cakra* here represents a *purusha*, while *Gadā* represents a *devī*. The *āyudhas* of the upper hands of the god are not very clear. However, they can be taken as *padma* and *Śaṅkha*. The *Vaijayantī* worn by the god is clearly seen. But other details of the image are lost, since the condition of the stone is very bad. The *Vāhana* of the deity is not shown.

This is the only image of Vishṇu showing *āyudha-purusha* discovered in Assam, so far. This type of icon of Vishṇu are noticed in Bengal and Bihar regions. On stylistic ground the icon may be ascribed to 6th-7th century.[1]

The second image represents Lakshmī-Nārāyana. It is a miniature bronze (?) image (8.5 cm × 9.5 cm) found at Kāchumārī, village near Morān. Here Nārāyana or Vishṇu is made to sit in *lalitāsana* posture on a lotus seat and on his left thigh sits his consorts, Lakshmī. Vishṇu holds in his four hands clock-wise *gadā*, *cakra śaṅkha* and *padma*. The deity wears a *Karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* (?), an unusual phenomena. The figure of Lakshsmī in comparison with the figure of the god looks much smaller. The object of the left hand of the goddess is not clear. The lower left hand of the god and the right hand of the goddess are embracing the bodies of each other. Below the feet of the God is seen Garuḍa in his usual posture. The sculpture does not have *ādhāra* (frame). Stylistically, this piece of work of art can be placed in *c.* 9th-10th century. This piece of metal art is the only icon of Lakshmī-Nārāyana noticed in Assam, so far.

The third image is a Muchalinda Buddha from Arunachal Pradesh. It is an image made of lead (12.6 cm × 7 cm). Here Buddha has been shown as seated in *bhumisparśa* mudrā. The lord has the usual dress and ornaments. Behind the deity a conical stale depicted showing flames looks like serpent-hood. The back of the sculpture shows a votive *stūpa*. The stylistic features of this image are comparable to certain traits of Pāla school as opined by Mukherjee.[2] But so far icon or Buddhist site belonging to 8th, 9th or 10th century has not been noticed in Arunachal Pradesh.

Tripurā Bhairavī

A very interesting and rare icon of a *śākta* goddess (Fig. 64) has been on display in the Assam State Museum. It is a stone image measuring 1.30 cm × 70 cm. The image was brought from Jogījāan, Nowgāon district. The image was sadly broken into some pieces. P.C. Sarma, Exploration Officer, Directorate of Archaeology, Assam brought these pieces one by one separately to the Assam State Museum and later joined them together with the help of quickfix, which is, no doubt, a creditable work.

The deity is seated in *padmāsana* attitude on lotus seat. The four armed deity wears a long *muṇḍmālā*. She holds with her right upper hand an *akshamālā* and with her left upper hands a *pushtaka*. The right lower hand is made to hold something which is broken. The left lower hand displays *abhaya-mudrā*.

The *śilāpaṭṭa* of the image is pointed and tapering slightly towards the bottom. Above the head of the deity is seem a *Kirtimukha* motif from whose maw hangs a pine-cone like object.[3]

As we have already said that the image was broken into pieces and later the broken pices were joined. One piece of the *śilāpaṭṭa* to the right of the figure of the deity is raissing. On the *śilapaṭṭa* around the figure of the deity are seen the miniature figures of thirteen other minor deities, both male and female. Figures of four devotes are seen below the *śilāpaṭṭa* are the members of the *saptamatrikas*. To the left of the deity figures of Vaishṇavī, Kaumarī, Maheśvarī, Brāhmī and four figures of Bhairava are seen. To the right of the deity a few figures are seen one of which can be identified with Cāmuṇḍā. One figure can not be precisely identified. The other three figures can be taken as Bhairava. As we have mentioned above a portion of the *śilāpaṭṭa* has been broken and missing. This broken portion must have depicted some other figures of the *śaptamātrikās*. All the *mātrikā* figures are depicted with their *vāhanas*. The Bhairava figures are depicted as seated on *pretāsana*. The main figure of the deity has been rightly identified as Tripura Bhairavi by G.N. Bhuyan.[4] Stylistically, this piece of stone art can be dated to 10th-11th century.[5]

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3. See for details Souvenir, *All India Seminar on the necessity of Preservation of Nature and Cultural Heritage of Assam*, Nowgāon, 1984, organised by the Directorate of Museum, Assam, pp. 9-10, and *BASM* Vol., V, 1985 pp. 25-31.
4. *Ibid.*

5. The detailed descriptions of the Tāntric Buddhist (female) image, holding a *khaḍga in sthānaka* attitude from Chaigaon, could not be given here. The stone image of Sūrya preserved in the same place also could not be included here. It is an image of the deity having usual features. Both the icons are held in worship in the *garbhagṛhas* (two) of the ruined temple at Chaigāon (merghar). They may be placed in 10th-12th century. We shall publish a paper on the ruins of the temple at the site wherein we propose to include these two icons.
   We are also preparing separate monographs each on the bronzes from Narakāsur hills, Images from Ambari, Ruins of Malinithan, Ruins of Maḍan-Kamdev and Sculptures from Piṅgaleśvar which are proposed to be published in phased manner.
   I express my thanks to Dr. D. Chutia, Secretary, Kāmarūpa Anusandhān Samity, Guwahati, Miss. Savini Kakoti, Mr. Biśveśvar Goswami, Mr. Anil Das of Directorate of Museums, Assam and others who helped me in various ways.

Glossary

Abhaya-mūdrā : Hand-posture, indicative of the assurance of safety and protection. The hands in this *mudrā* shows the raised palm with its inner surface turned outwards and fingers stretched.

Adhiṣthāna : Plinth; Pedestal; base.

Akshamālā : String of beads such as is carried by the Roman Catholic priests. The beads consist of dried fruit, called in Sanskrit, *Rudrāksha*.

Ālīḍha : A particular āsana for attitude of legs, in all respects similar to attitude adopted in drawing the bow charged with an arrow. The right leg is outstretched while the left is slightly bent. This attitude should be distinguished from the *Pratyālīḍha* attitude in which case the left leg is outstretched while the right is slightly bent and placed behind.

Āmalaka : Gadrooned or fluted oblate spheroid, resembling an *āmalka* fruit.

Antarīya : Long unstitched cloth to be wrapped around the waist and legs of a male person.

Antarvāsa : Long cloth to be wrapped around the lower part of the body of Buddha and Buddhist monks.

Antarāla : Vestibule; chamber in front of the shrine and cells.

Añjali : Name of a mūdrā, also known as the *Sarvarājendra* mudrā or *Samputāñjali*. It is the *mudrā* in which the two hands

		are clasped against the chest, palm to palm, both of which are extended upward with all fingers errect or slightly bent.
Aṅkuśa	:	Seat, seating posture.
Ardhaparyaṅka	:	Also called *Mahārājalīlā*, is a particular *āsana* of sitting. Both the legs are on the same pedestal; one of the knee is raised while the other is bent in the usual position. The *āsana* should be distinguished from the *Lalitāsana* in which case one leg is pendant, while the other is bent in the usual position. When both the legs are pendant, the attitude is called *Bhadrāsana*.
Ardhamaṇḍapa	:	Porch; varanda.
Āsana	:	Seat; sitting posture.
Bāṇa	:	Arrow.
Bhūmiṣparśa	:	Also called *Bhūmisparaśana* or the *Bhūsparśa*, is the name of a *mudrā*. The right hand exhibiting this *mudrā* has the palm turned inward and the fingers outstretched, with the tips touching the ground. The deity showing this *mūdrā* must sit in the *Vajraparyaṅka* attitude.
Bhaṅga	:	Bodily flexion; bent or curved part.
Bhūmi-āmalaka	:	*Āmalaka*-shaped member, demarcating one *bhūmi* from another in the spire of a temple.
Bhiṭṭi	:	Wall.
Bījapura	:	Citron fruit.
Cakra	:	Wheel or disc.
Chaitya	:	Funeral mound or monument. Usually used in the sense of *stūpa*, though in its wider connotation it denotes a temple, a sacred tree and even an image of Buddha.
Chaitya-window motif	:	Ornamental motif in the form of an arch or stylized horse-shoe, resembling the front window of a rock-cut Buddhist *chaitya*-hall of the early period.
Chāmara-cāmara	:	Fly-whisk or (chowrie) fan made from yak's hair.
Chhatra	:	Umbrella.
Dasāvatara	:	Ten incarnations of Vishṇu.
Damaru	:	Small drum, such as is carried by Hindu god Śiva.
Daṇḍa	:	Staff or mace.
Dāvra	:	Door way or door frame.

Dāvra-Śirapaṭṭi	Door-lintel.
Dāvraśākhā	Door-jamb.
Dhvaja	Flag; emblem.
Dehalī or Śilālī	Door-sill.
Darpaṇa	Mirror.
Devālaya	Temple.
Dhanus	Capa or bow.
Dharmacakrapravartana	Turning the wheel or range of law, **Buddha's first** preaching of *Dharma* at Sārnāth.
Dharmacakrapravartana-mdurā	Hand-posture, primarily associated with Buddha's first preaching. This *mudrā* is a combination of *Jñana* (wisdom) *mudrā* and *Vyākhayana* (exposition)—mudrā. In this *mudrā* the two hands are held near the chest, the right palm (inner surface), turned outwards, with the tips of the thumb and index finger joined and the left palm turned inwards.
Dhyānamūdrā	Hand pose, indicative of deep meditation. In this *mūdrā* the two palms (inner surface upward) with fingers stretched, are placed one upon the other above the lap ; also called *samādhi-mudra*.
Dhāyanāsana or *Vajraparyaṅkāsana* : or *Vajrāsana* :	The meditative pose. The two legs being firmly locked with both the soles apparant, the characteristic sitting attitude of *dhyāni* Bhuddhas. *Dhyānāsana* should be different from the *pariyaṅka* attitude in which case the legs are placed one upon the other with both the soles invisible.
Gadā	Mace or club.
Godhā	Iguana.
Gavāksha	Small ornamental niches on the lowest towers ; window.
Ghaṭa	Water pot, pitcher.
Garbhagṛiha	Sanctum of a shrine ;
Ghanṭā	Bell.
Hāra	A kind of necklace.
Harmikā	Small pavilion ; cubical member at the crown of the dome of a *stūpa* below the saft of the umbrella.
Haṁsa	Geese

Hināyana	: 'little vehicle' ; earlies form of Buddhism in which the only object of worship is stupa.
Jaṭāmukuṭa	: Crown of matted hair. Usually worn by Śaiva and *Śakta* worshipper.
Kalaśa	: Ordinary water vessal of metal or earth.
Kuṇḍala	: Earring
Kamaṇḍalu	: It is different from Kalasa. It is smaller in size and is provided with a projecting pipe for discharging water.
Karṇḍa-mukuṭa	: Crown usually worn by female deities and gaṇeśa.
Kapāla	: Severed head of a man or cup made of a skull or a bowl.
Kirīṭa-mukuṭa	: Crown worn by Vishṇu.
Kartri or *Karttari*	: Smaller knife.
Kaṅkana	: Bangle.
Khaḍga	: Sword.
Khaṭvāṅga	: Magic wand ; the stick is generally surmounted either by *Vajra* or *Kapāla*, or the *Triśūla* or the banner, or all of them ; in any case, for a *Khatvaṅga*, skulls are necessary, and it will be so called even if nothing else is present.
Kheṭaka	: Shield
Khattaka	: Niche
Lalitāsana	: Sitting posture with ease in which one leg folded rest flat on the seat and the other hangs down gracefully from the seat.
Laghustaṁbha	: Pillaster.
Lilāsana	: Same as *Lalitāsana*.
Lokpāla	: Gurdian of cardinal points.
Liṅgam	: Phallic symbol of Śiva.
Lalāṭabimva	: The central figure of a door-linted.
Mālā	: same as *akshamālā*.
Maṇḍala	: Magic circle containing mystic fingers and diagram and figures of gods and goddesses contructing a *maṇḍala*.
Mahāparinirvāna	: Great relief.
Mahārājalīlā	: Sitting posture with princly ease in which both the legs are on the same seat, one of the knees raised on the other leg folded, rest flat on the seat.
Makara	: Crocodile.

Mayūra	: Peacock.
Mudgara	: Hammer ; it may also mean staff or mace.
Mūdrā	: Mystic pose of hand or hands.
Mūṣala	: Pestle.
Mastaka	: Head, crowned animals of a temple.
Mātuliṅga	: Citron.
Mukuṭa	: Crown.
Maṇḍapa	: Large open hall ; porch.
Mahāyana	: 'Great vehicle', late development of ***hināyana*, that** emphasises on the Bhuddhist worship.
Mithuna	: Couple in erotic pose, in loving embrace.
Moksha	: Salvation.
Nāga	: Serpent, shark, proboscis of an elephant.
Nāgapāśa	: Noose made of serpent.
Nagara	: capital or city-.
Naṭamandira	: Dancing hall. Usually the middle structure of a Orissan temple.
Naṭarāja	: Śiva as lord of dancing.
Nūpura	: Anklet.
Padma	: Lotus.
Padmakośa	: Lotus bud.
Paryaṅkāsana	: Sitting posture on couch or seat ; in this *āsana* generally the legs are placed on one upon the other in which both the soles almost invisible.
Pāśa	: Noose.
Pātra	: Pot, bowl.
Prabhāvali	: Halo.
Puṣpa-kuṇḍala	: Earing of flowers.
Puṣtaka	: Book or manuscripts.
Paraśu	: Axe.
Preta	: Ghost.
Pithikā	: Stele
Ratna	: Jewel
Ratha	Chariot
Rūpa-paṭṭikā	: Frieze.

Śakti	:	Energy or active power of a deity personified as his wife.
Samādhi-mudrā	:	same as *dhyāna-mudrā*.
Sthānaka	:	Standing posture.
Samapādasthānaka	:	Standing posture in which legs are firm and strength without any bent and two verticle halves of the symmetrically disposed with the plumb line along the middle of the body corresponding to its vertical axis.
Śaṅkha	:	Conch-shell.
Sanghāta-mūrtī	:	composite image.
Savyaṁpradhānamūrtī	:	Image depicted alone and not in group.
Śikhara	:	Spire or tower of a temple.
Stūpa	:	Derived from the *stūp* (to heap). The *stūpā* is of mound or structure. The Buddhist *stūpa* are of four broad catagories, (i) *Śārīrika* (erected over corporeal relics) (ii) *pāribhogika* (built over the objects used by Buddha) (iii) buddśika (commemorative of the events in Buddha's life.) and (iv) votive (erected by devotees for attaining relegious merit).
Svastika	:	aspicious symbol shaped like a cross with the hands of the arms turning round in the same direction.
Staṁbha	:	Pillar.
Siṁha	:	lion.
Śilāpaṭṭa	:	Stele.
Sarvatobhadra	:	Auspicious on all sides.
Sūcīmūdrā	:	The pose used generally in the act of dancing. Though it is to be seen in other case also. All the fingers are stretched with tips joining at the end, so as to resemble a needle (sūcī).
Shālabhañjikā	:	A sculpture representing a girl gathering *shal* flowers (trees).
Staṁbha-śīrśa	:	Capital (Pillar capital).
Śāstra	:	Text of rules.
Śilpaśāstra	:	Text book of sculpture.
Tarjanī-mudra	:	The pose of the raised index fingers in a menacing attitude in the hand showing this *mudrā*. The index fingers only is

		raised while the other fingers are locked up in the first. If a *pāśa* or noose appears round the index fingers it is called *tarjanīpāśa*.
Tuṇḍila	:	Pot-bellied.
Triśūla	:	Trident.
Tridaṇḍa	:	Staff with three offshoots.
Tri-netra	:	Three eyes.
Tri-ratha	:	A central exterior projection (*rōhā*) in structures, platforms, etc.
Tāṇḍava	:	Fierce, violent dance of Shiva.
Tribhaṅga	:	Pose of the three bends of the body in dance and in art.
Toraṇa	:	Arched doorway.
Utpala Nilotpla	:	Blossom of *Nymphaea caerulea*, the blue lotus.
Upavīta	:	Sacred thread.
Ūrṇā	:	Circle of hair ; tiny circular protuberence or mark between eyebrows.
Ushṇīsha	:	Turban ; excrescence on the head of Buddha ; coping of a railing.
Uttarīya	:	Cloth for the upper part of the body ; scarf.
Vajra	:	Thunderbolt.
Vajra-paryaṅkāsana	:	Sitting posture in which both the legs are firmly crossed so that the feet (with soles visible) rest on the thighs.
Vajrāsana	:	Adamantine seat ; seat marked by the emblem of a thunderbolt. This seat refers to the one occupied by Buddha at the time of his enlightenment under the *Bodhi* tree.
Valaya	:	Thick circular bangle.
Vihāra	:	Monastery.
Vara-mūdrā or *Varada mudrā*	:	Hand-posture indicative of conferring boon (*vara*). The hand showing this *mudrā* is held downwards with the inner surface of the palm visible and fingers stretched.
Viśva-padma	:	The double conventional lotus.
Vyakhyana	:	Exposition.
Vyākhyāna mudrā or *upadeśa-mudrā*	:	Same as *Dharma chakra*.
Vaṇḍaṇā-mudrā or	:	Hand-posture expressing adoration and homage. In this

Añjali-hasta mudrā		*mudrā* the right hand is raised and right plam (inner surface visible) extended in the atttitude of paying homage.
Vimāna	:	Towered sanctuary containing the cells in which the deity is enshrined.
Vesara	:	Type of temple characteristic of Central India in the form of a Buddhist *chaitya*-hall.
Yāga	:	Sacrific.
Vāhana	:	The vehicle or the mount of gods or goddesses.
Vaijyantī	:	Long garland of flowers worn by Vishṇu.

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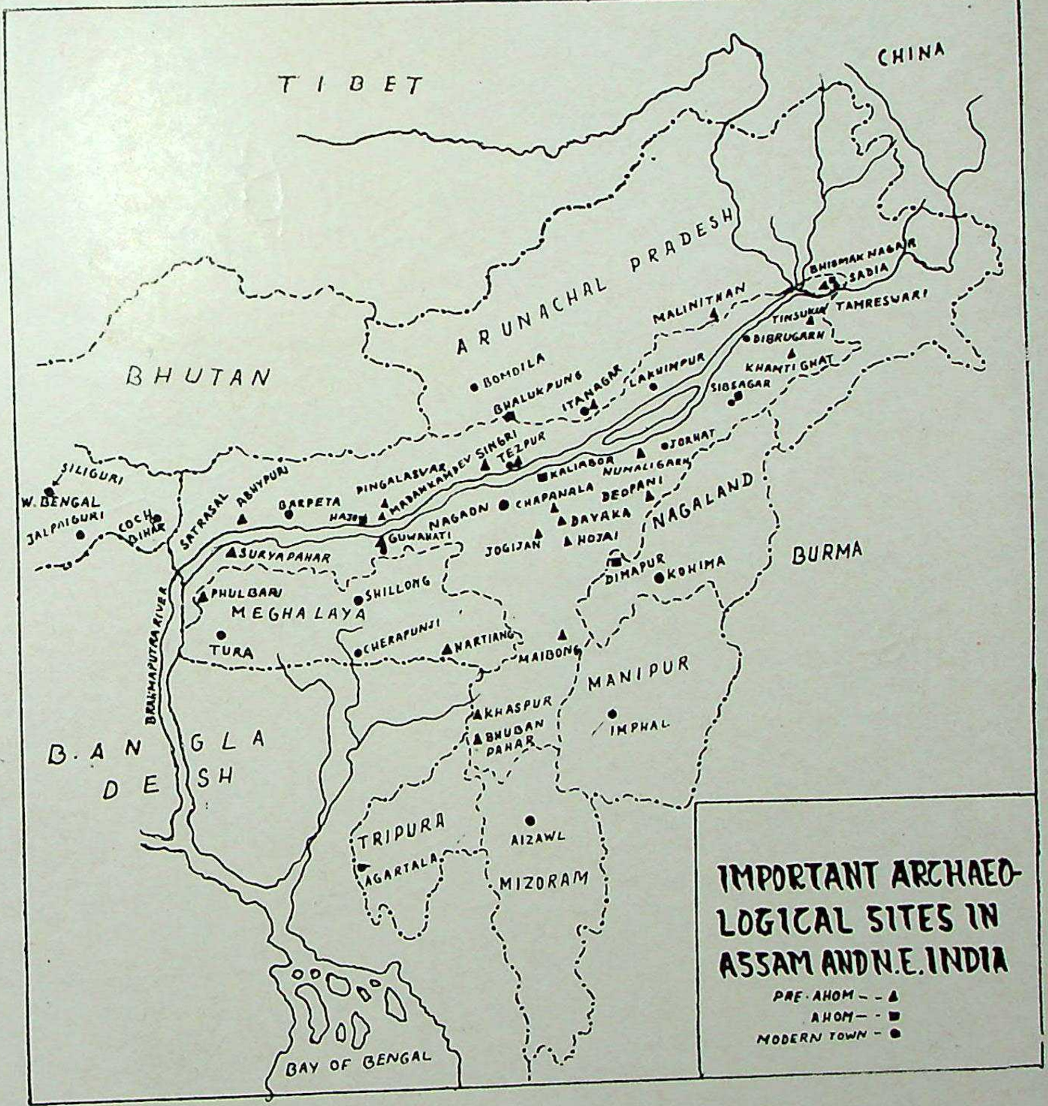
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BAY OF BENGAL
IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN ASSAM AND N.E. INDIA
PRE-AHOM - - ▲
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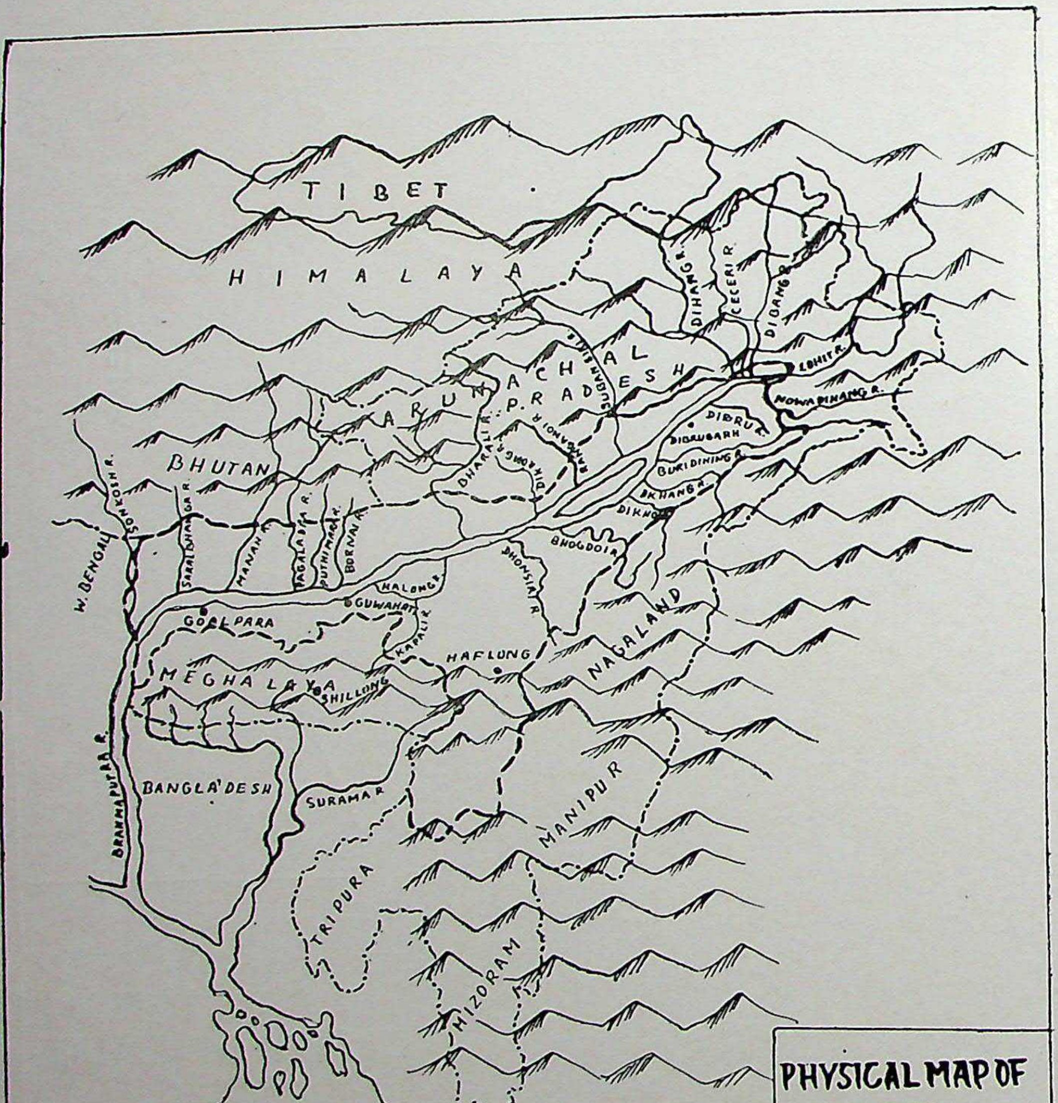
Fig. 1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DIBANG R.
LOHIT R.
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DIBRUGARH
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DIKHANG R.
DIKHOU
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SUBANSIRI
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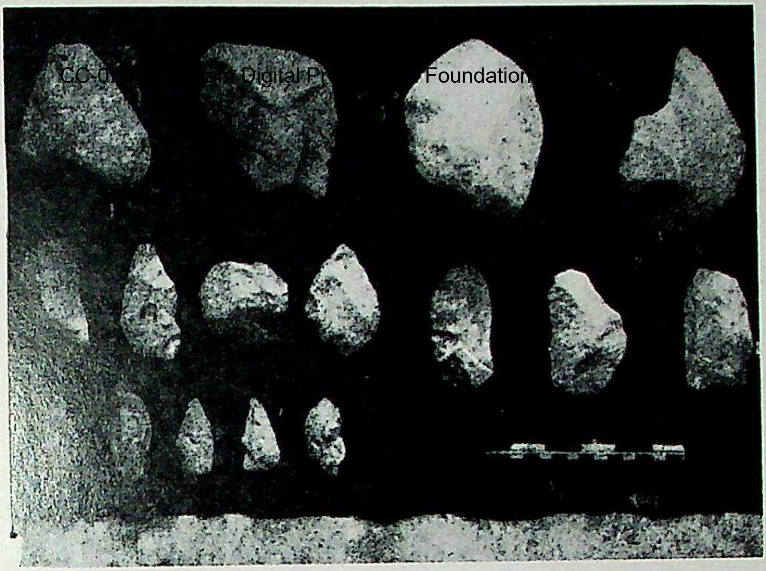
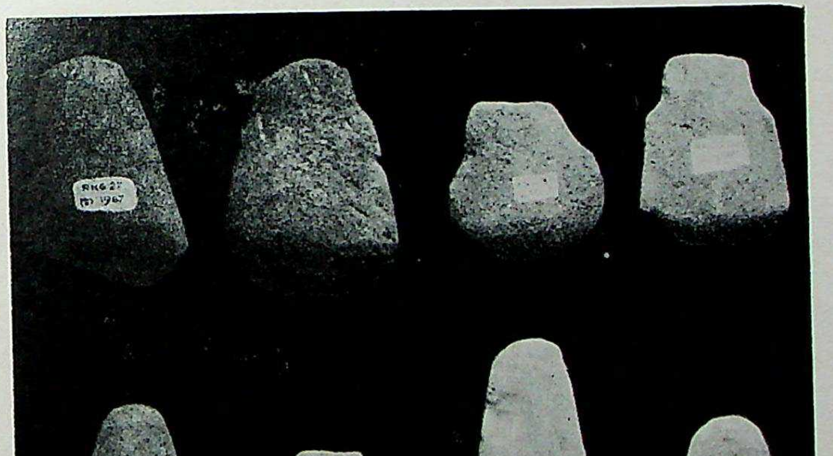
MANAH R.
PAGLADIA R.
PUTHIMARI R.
BORNAI R.
W. BENGAL
GOALPARA
GUWAHATI
HALONG R.
KAPALI R.
HAFLONG
NAGALAND
MEGHALAYA
SHILLONG
BANGLA'DESH
SURAMA R
MANIPUR
TRIPURA
MIZORAM
BRAHMAPUTRA R.
BAY OF BENGAL
PHYSICAL MAP OF ASSAM

Fig. 2



CC-0 Digital P Foundation

Fig. 3



CENTIMETRES
INCHES

Fig. 4

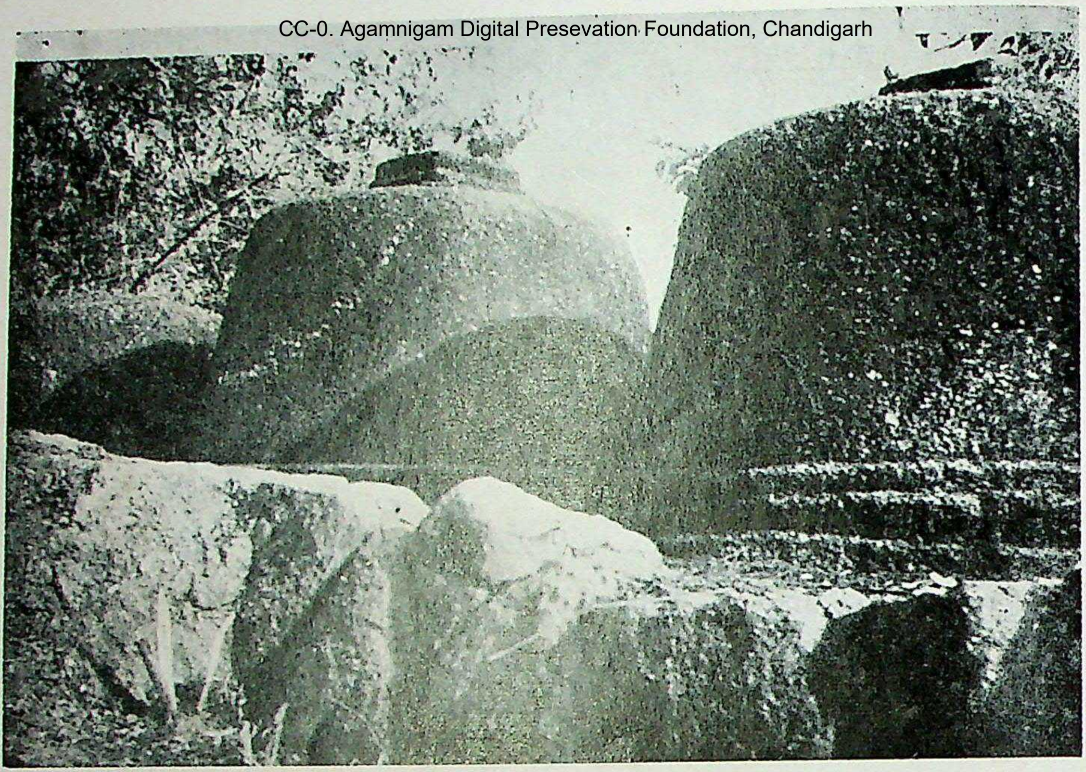


Fig. 5

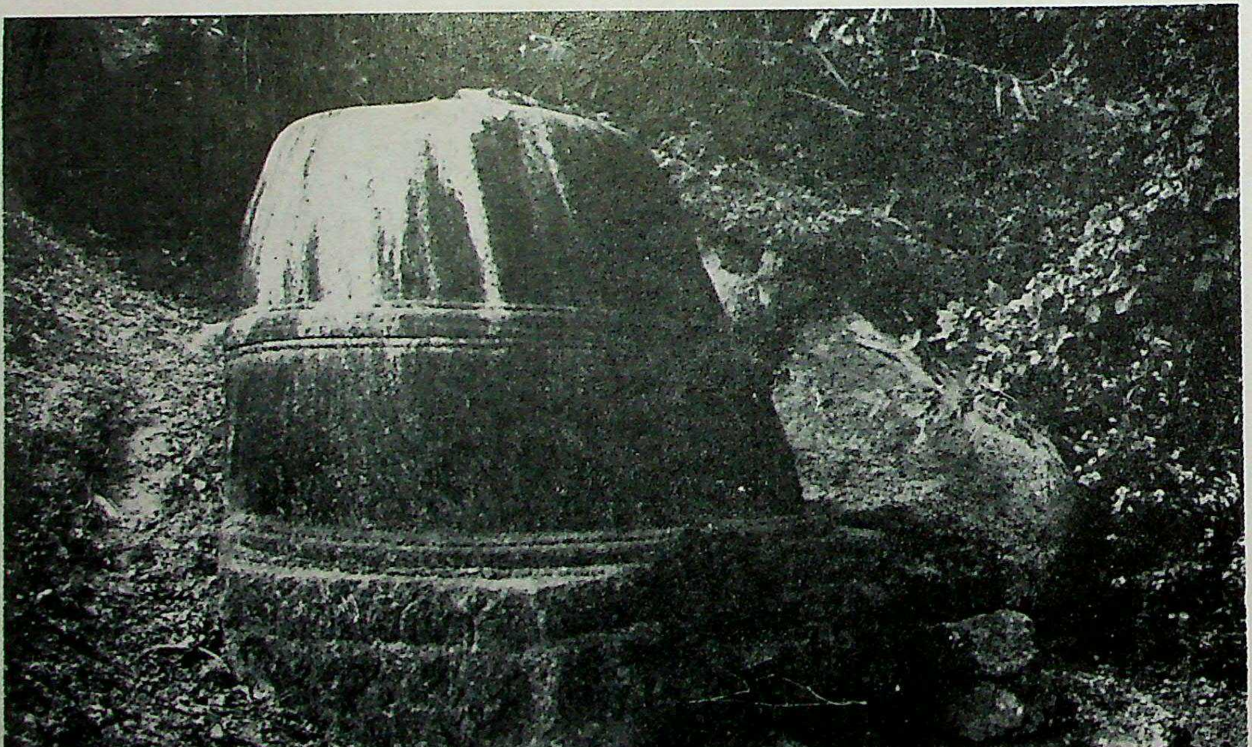


Fig. 6

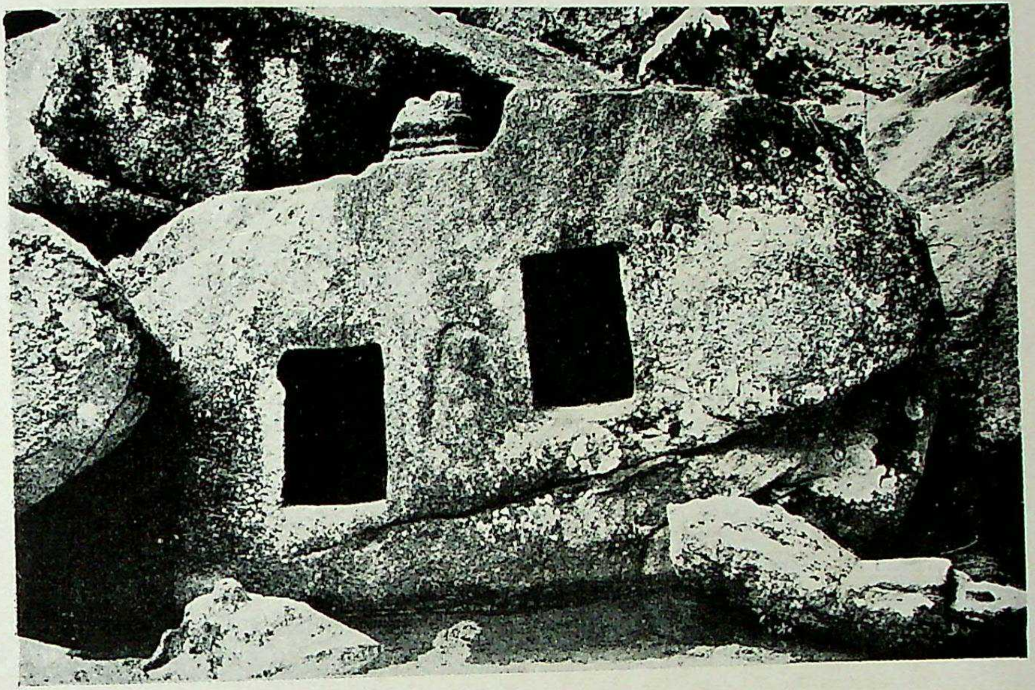


Fig. 7

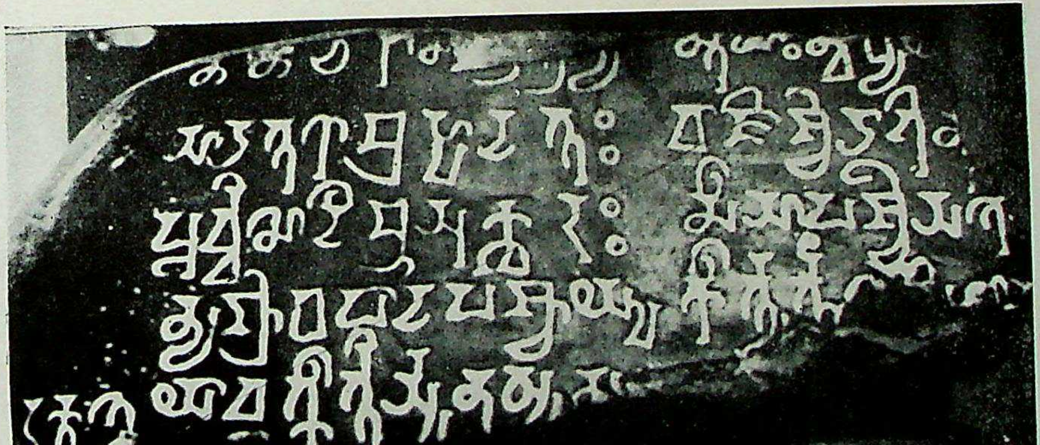


Fig. 8

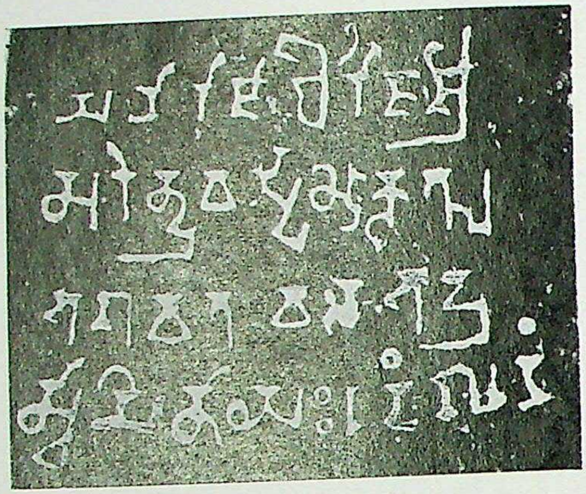


Fig. 9

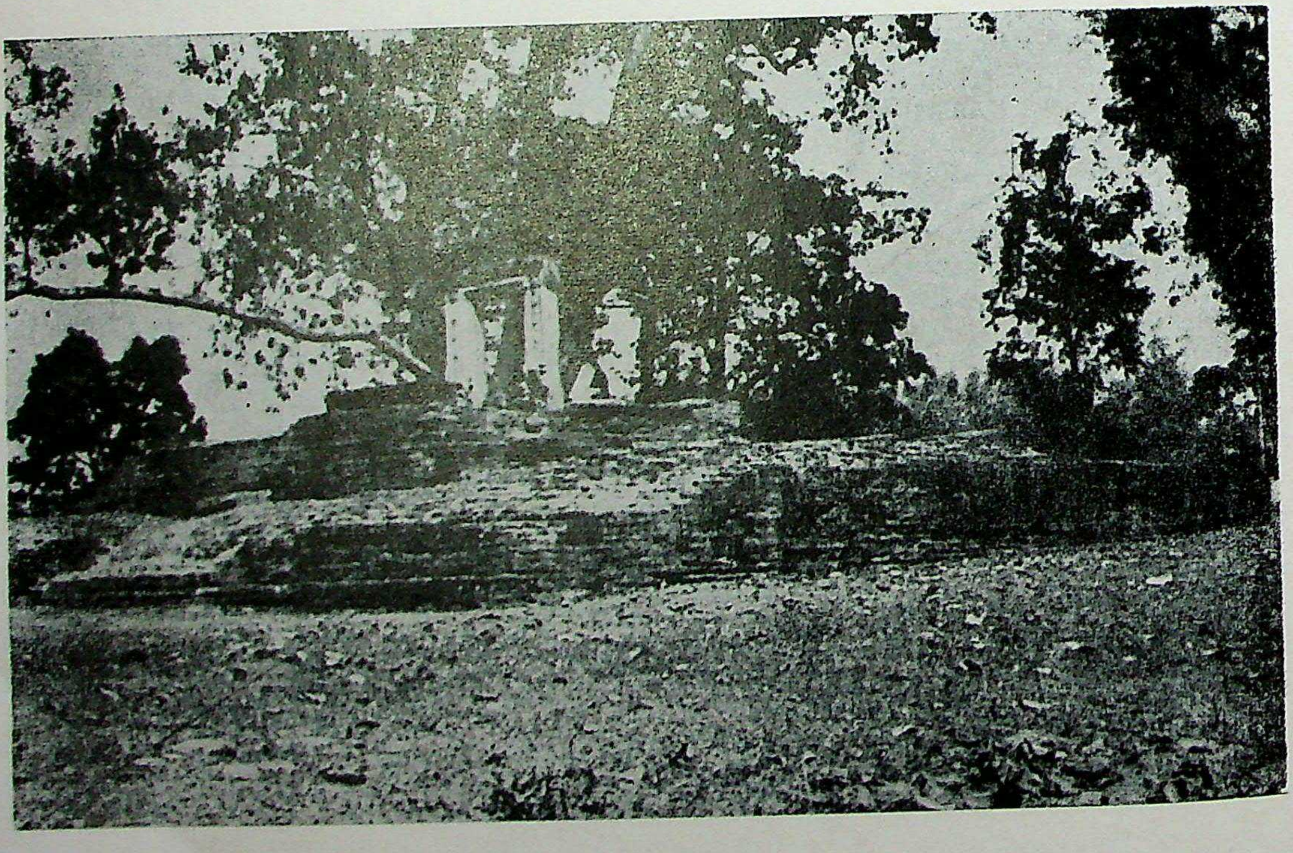
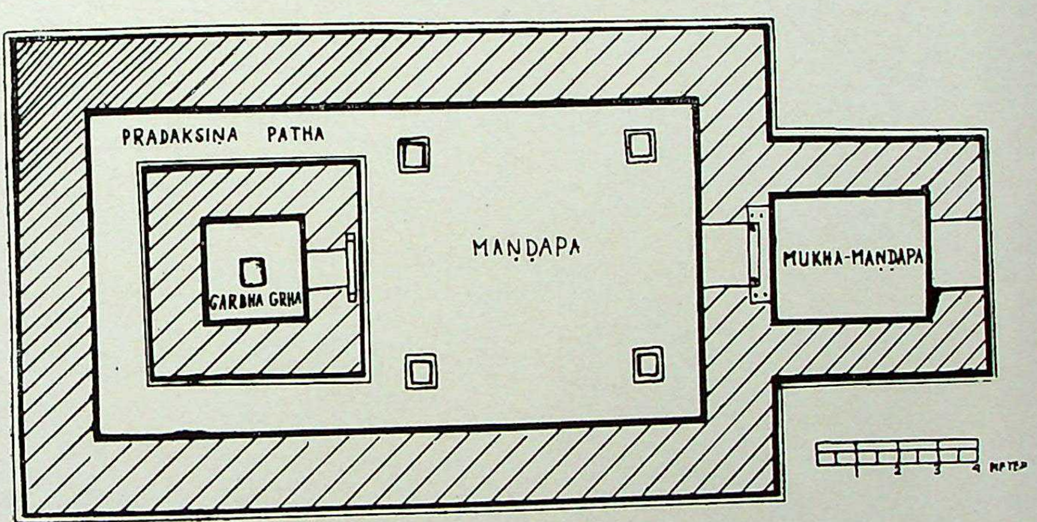


Fig. 10


PRADAKSIṆA PATHA
MAṆḌAPA
GARBHA GṚHA
MUKHA-MAṆḌAPA
1
2
3
4 METER

GUPTA TEMPLE AT DA-PARVATIĀ
[PLAN-OVER-PLINTH]

Fig. 11

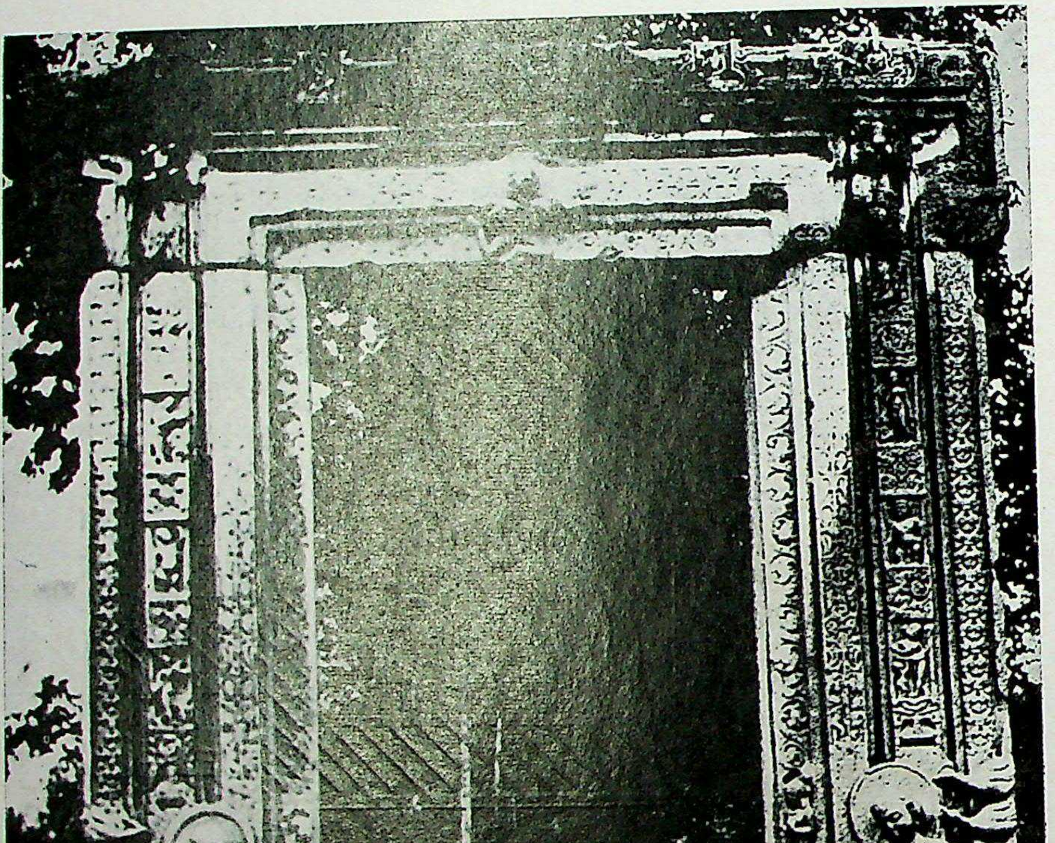


Fig. 12

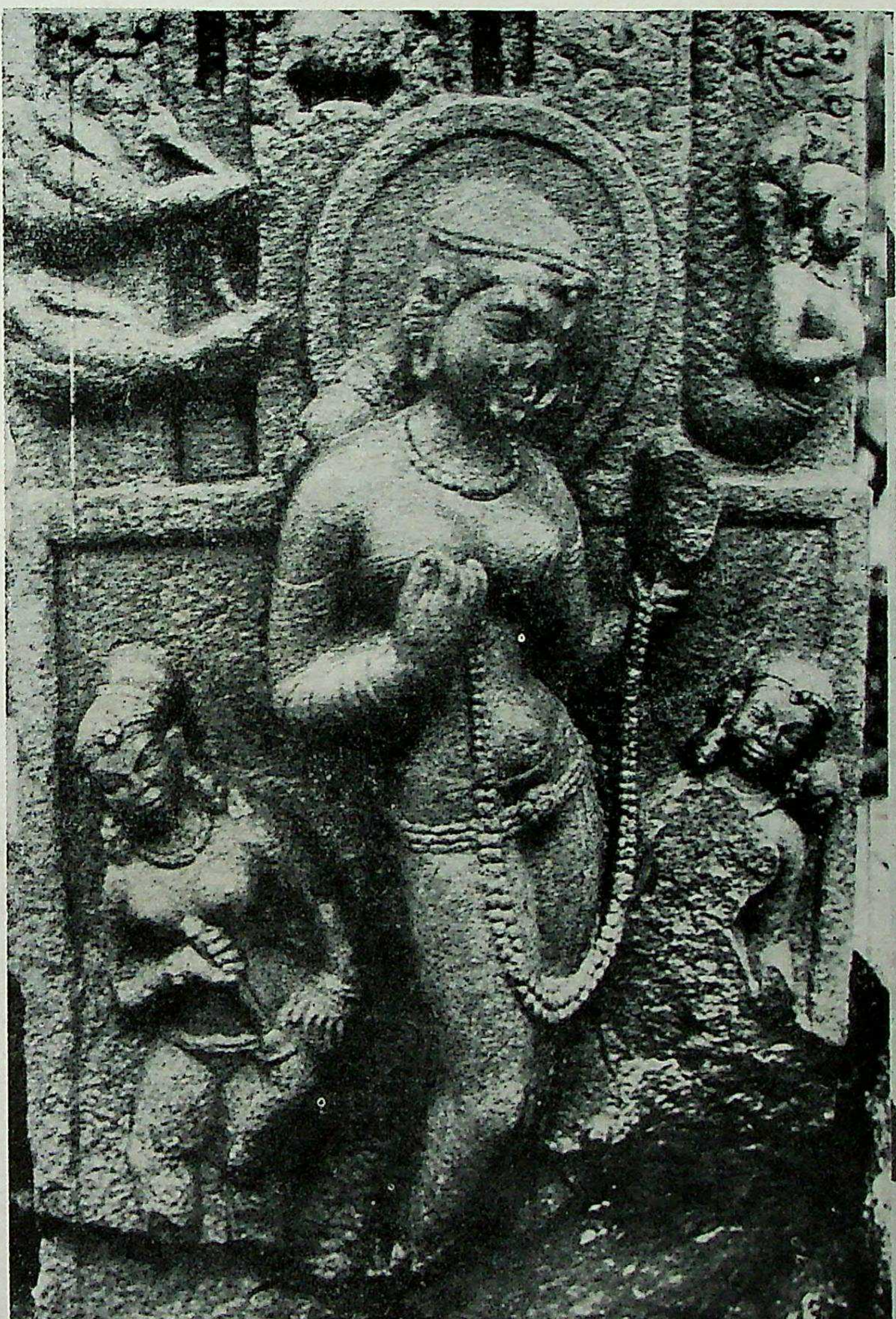


Fig. 13

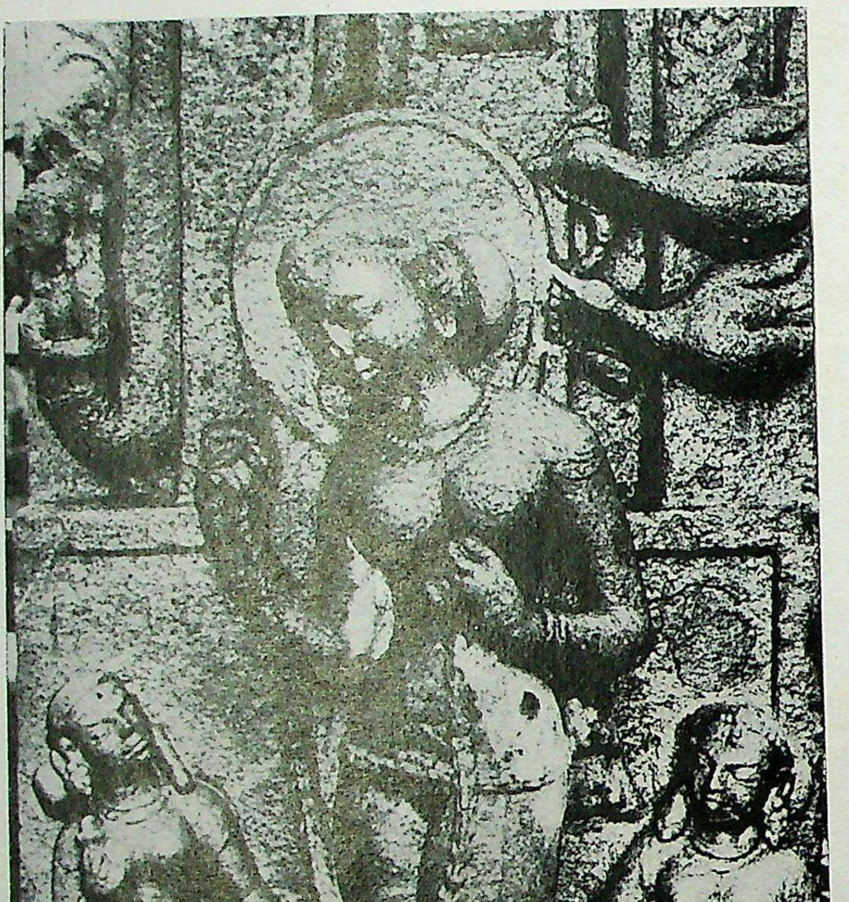


Fig. 14

d. Agamnigam [illegible] sevation [illegible] dation, Chandigarh

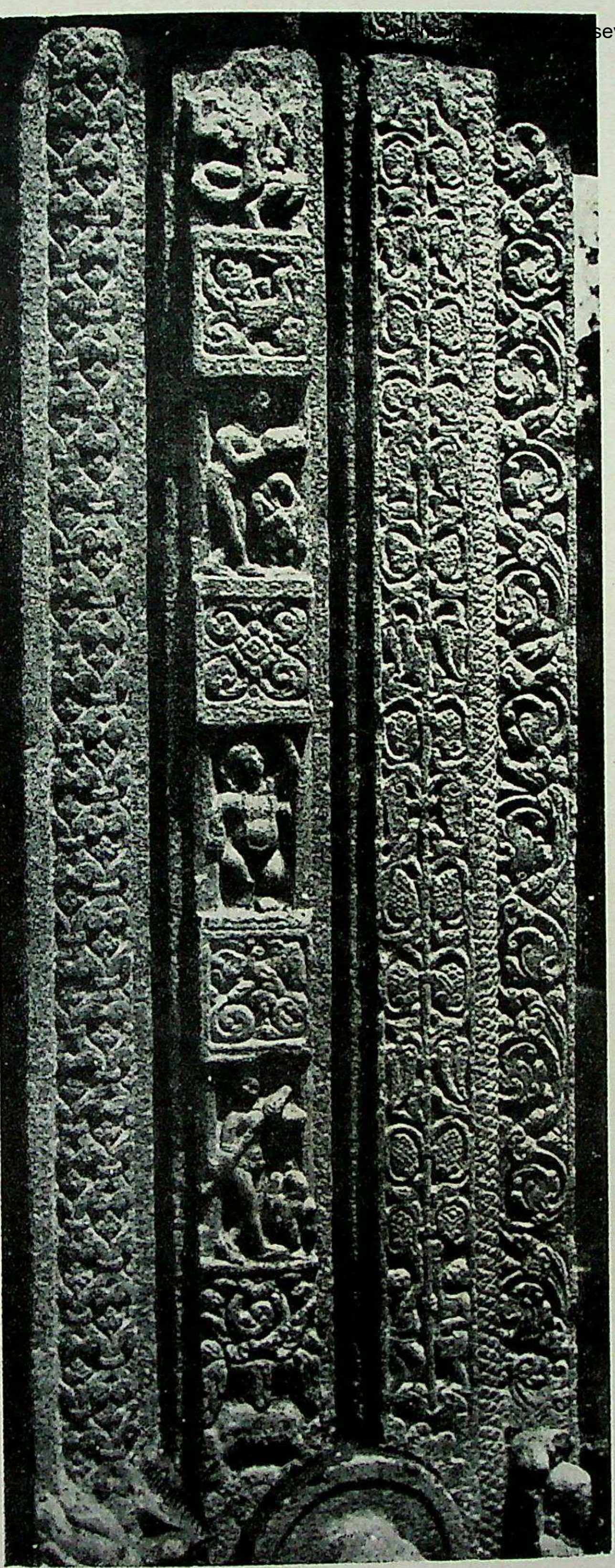


Fig. 15

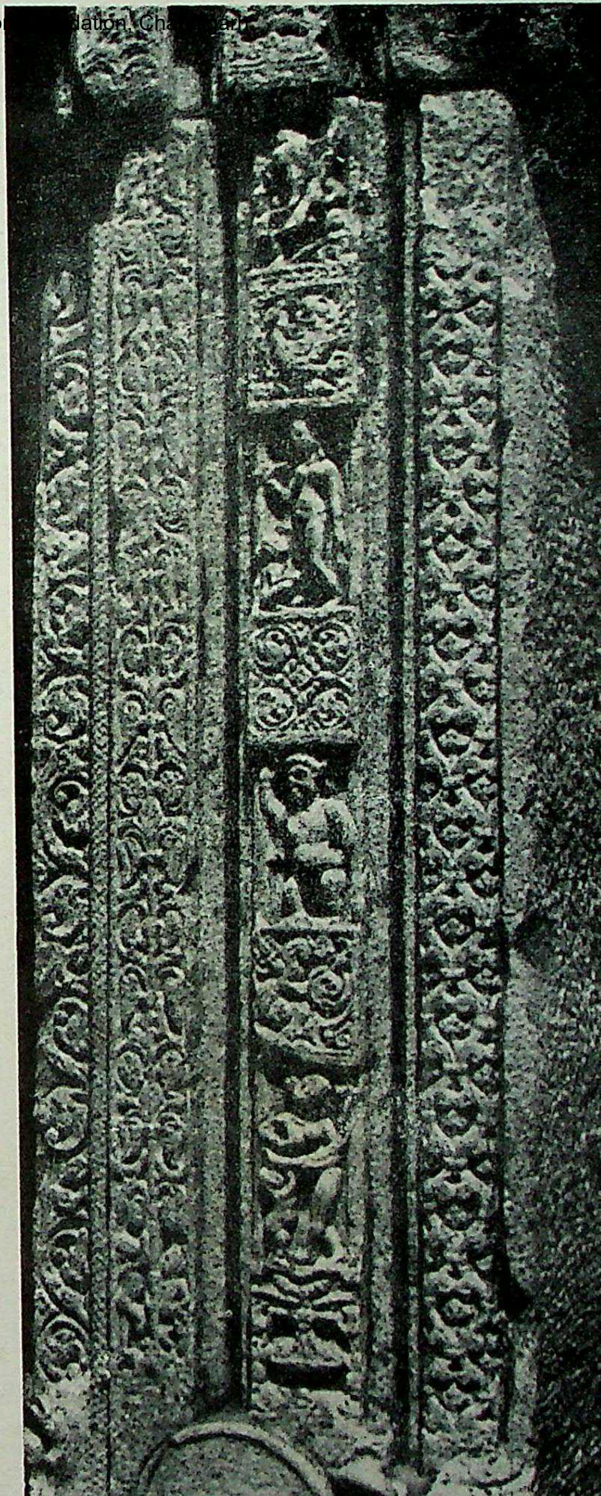


Fig. 16

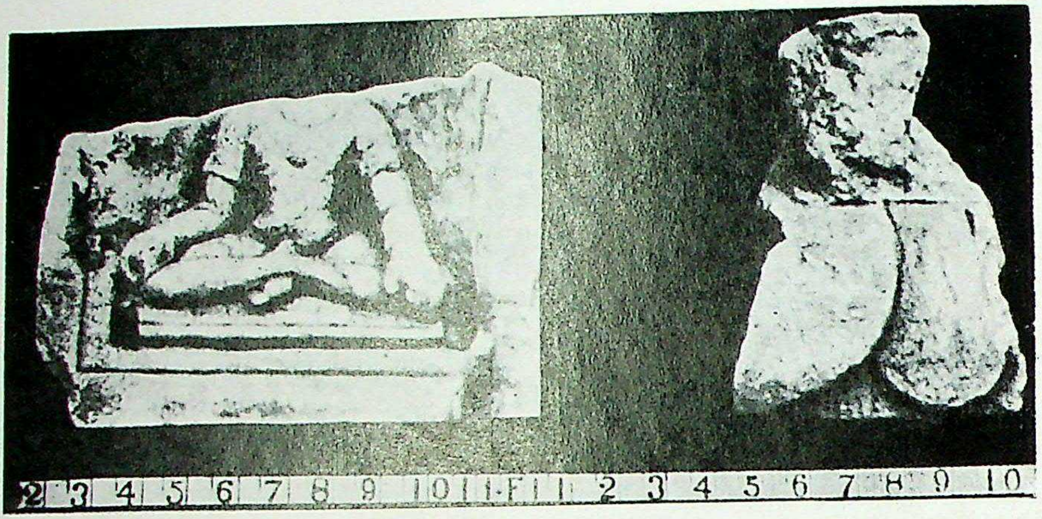

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Fig. 17

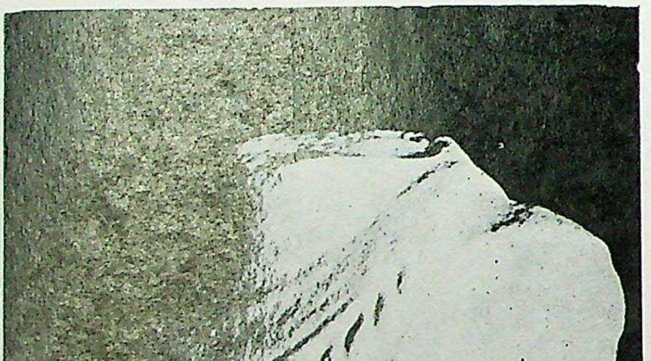


Fig. 18

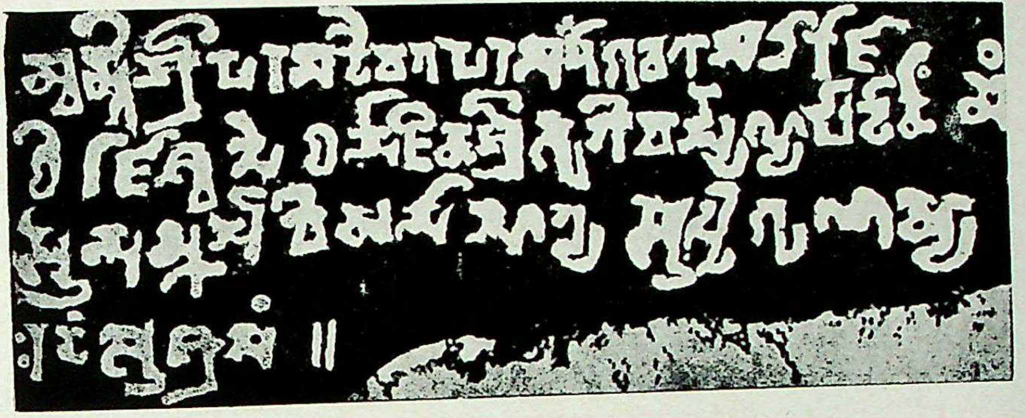


Fig. 19

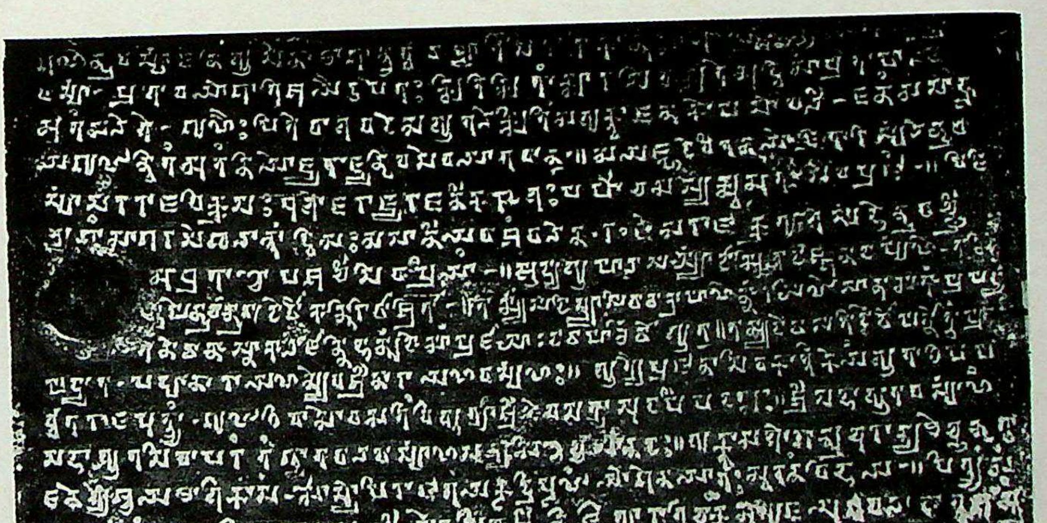


Fig. 20

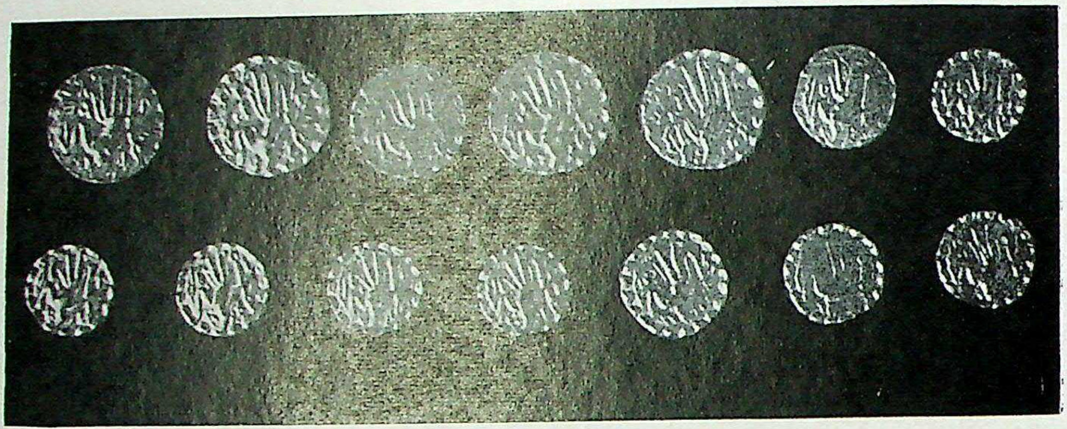


Fig. 21

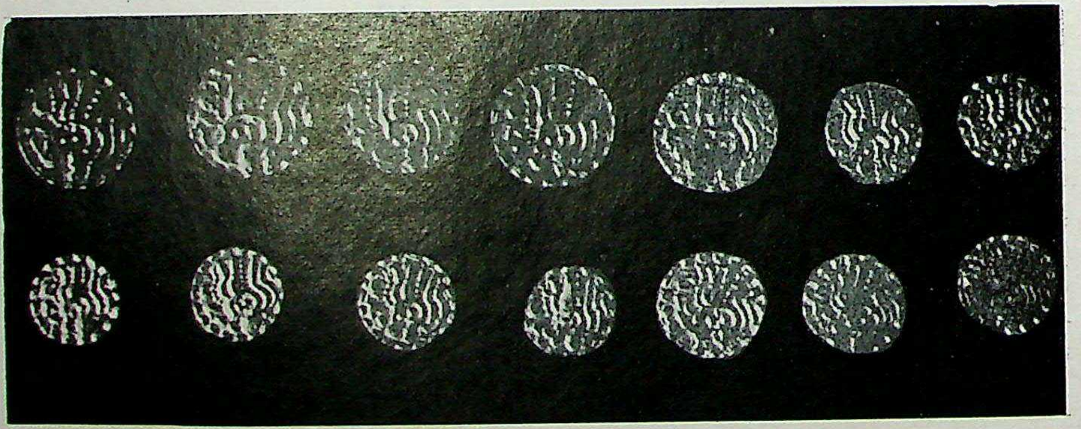


Fig. 22

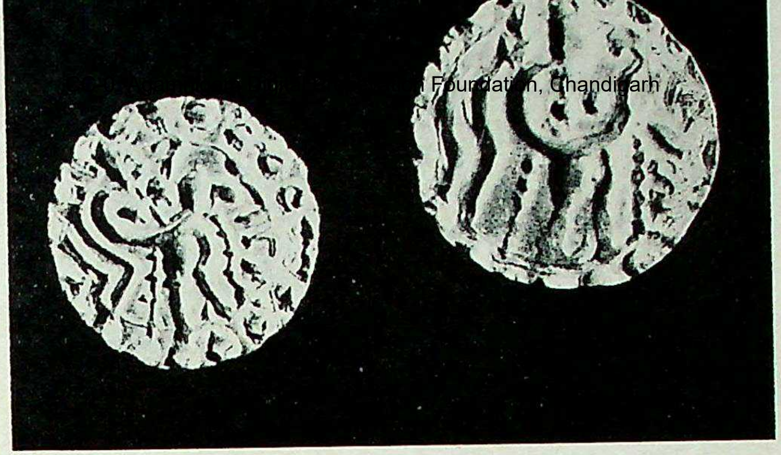


Fig. 23

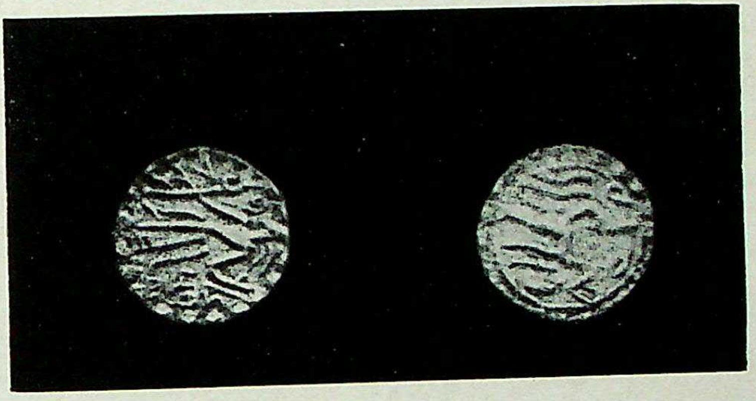


Fig. 24

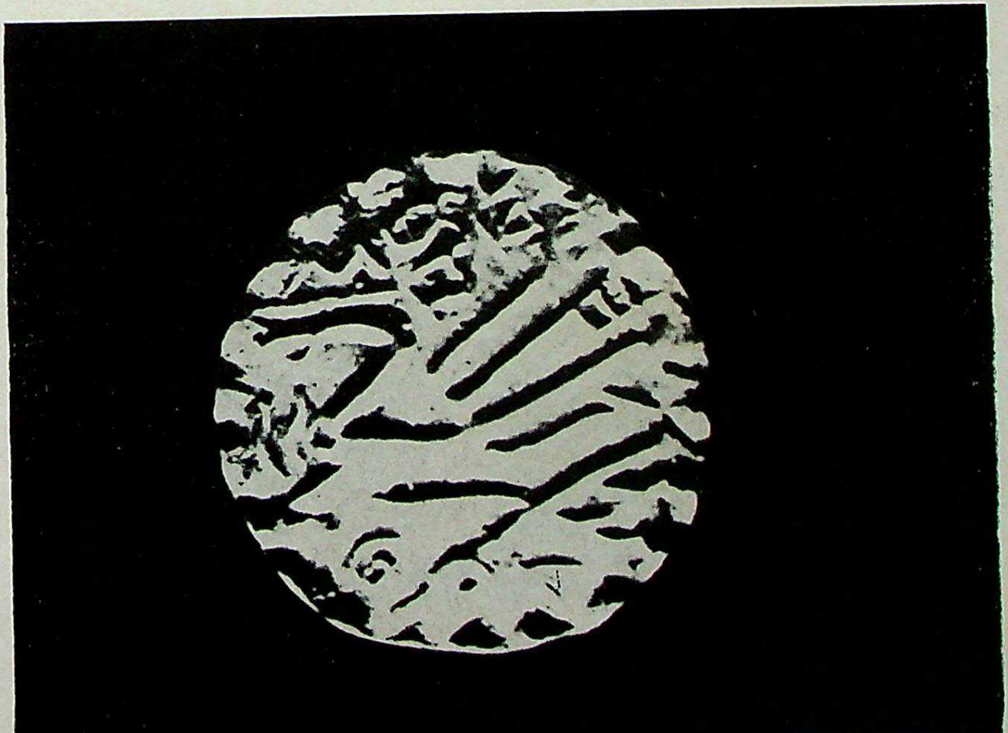


Fig. 25

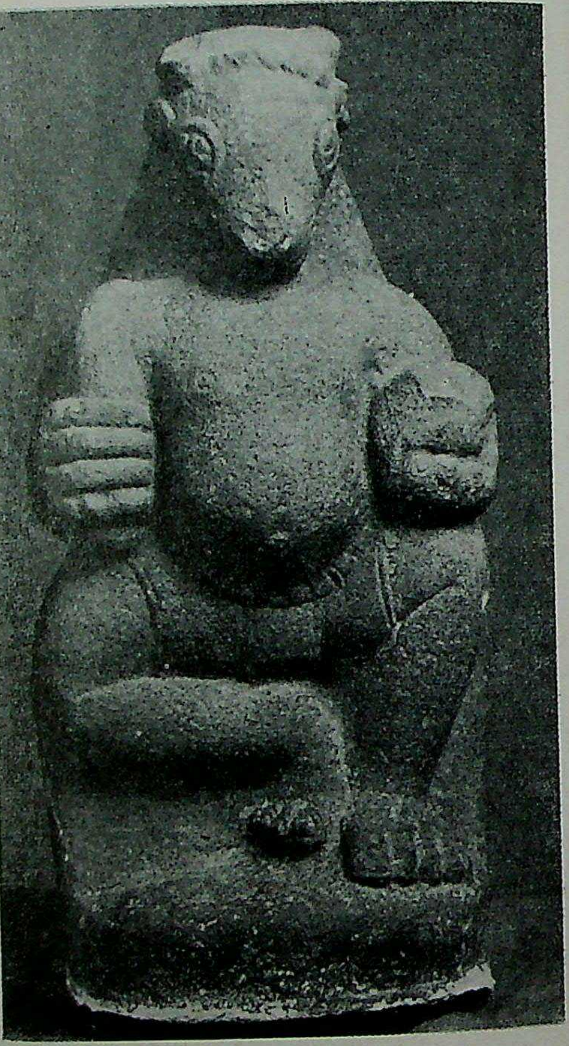


Fig. 27

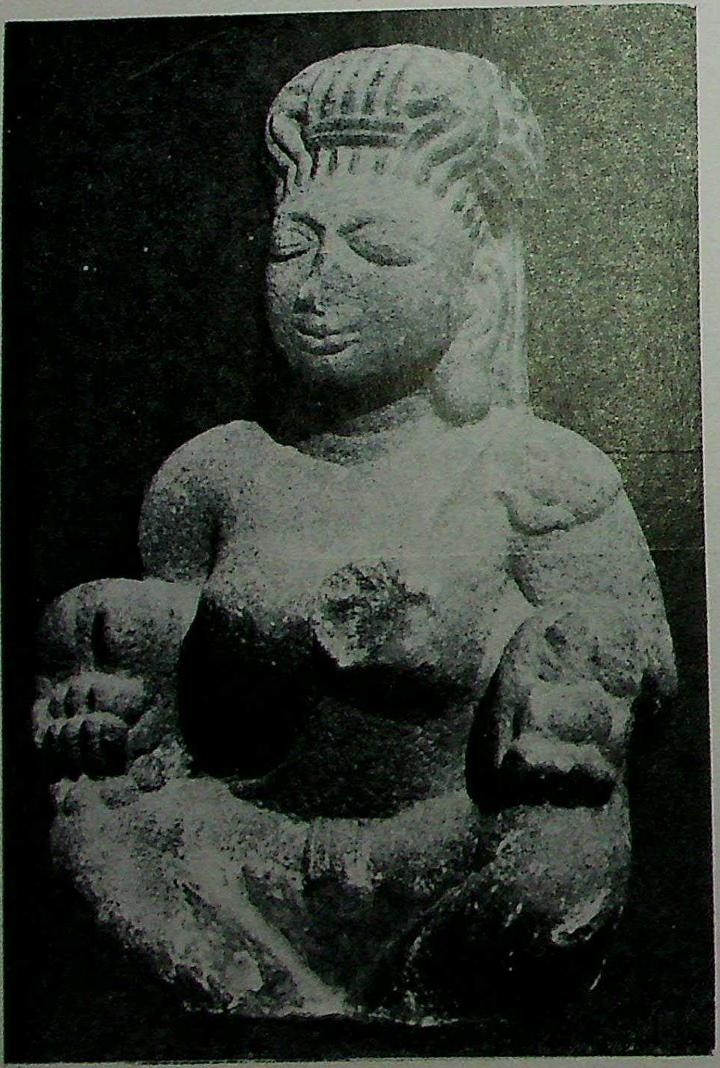


Fig. 26

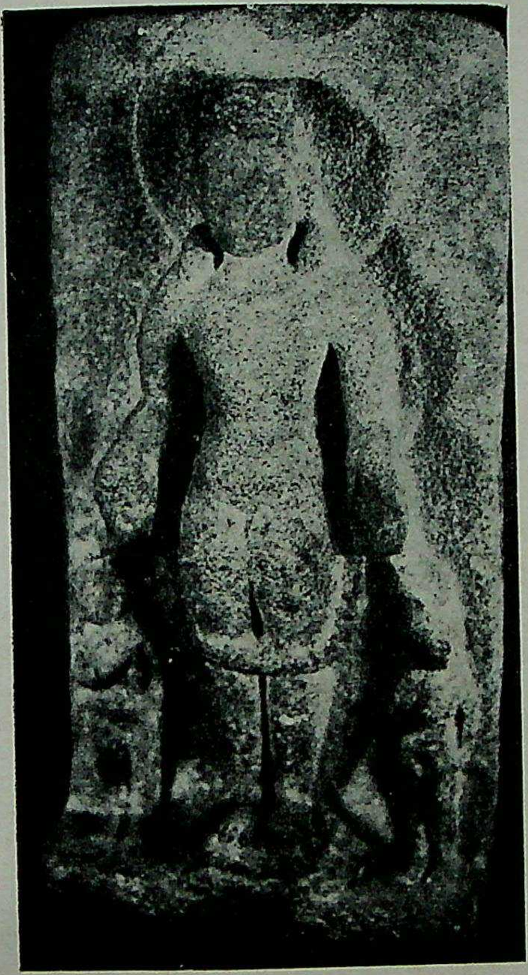


Fig. 28

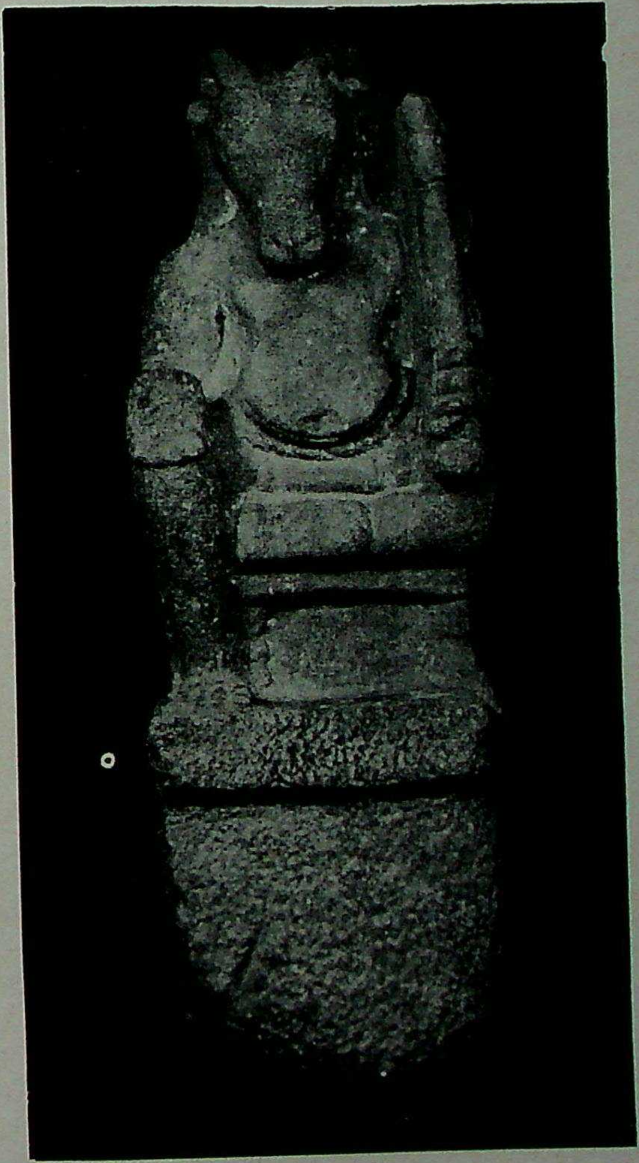


Fig. 29

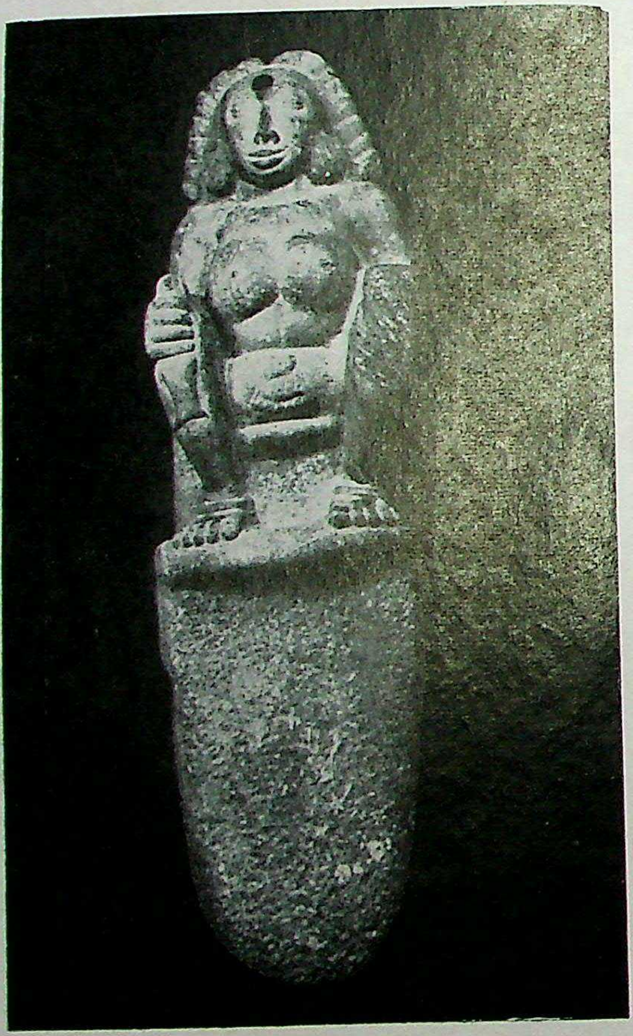


Fig. 30

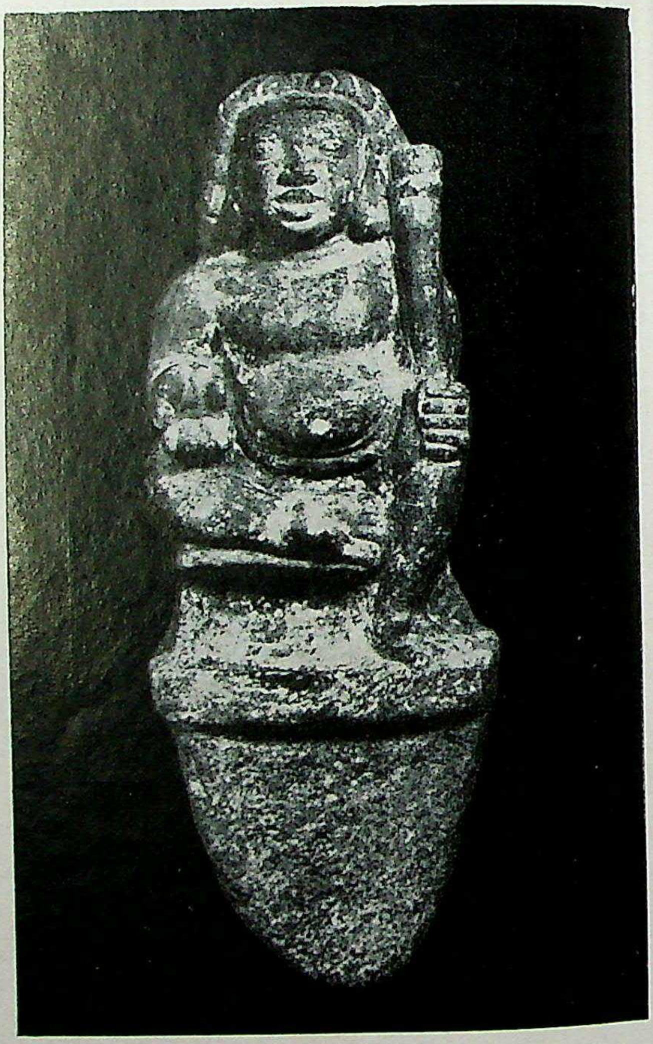


Fig. 31

CC-0. Agamni undation, Chandigarh

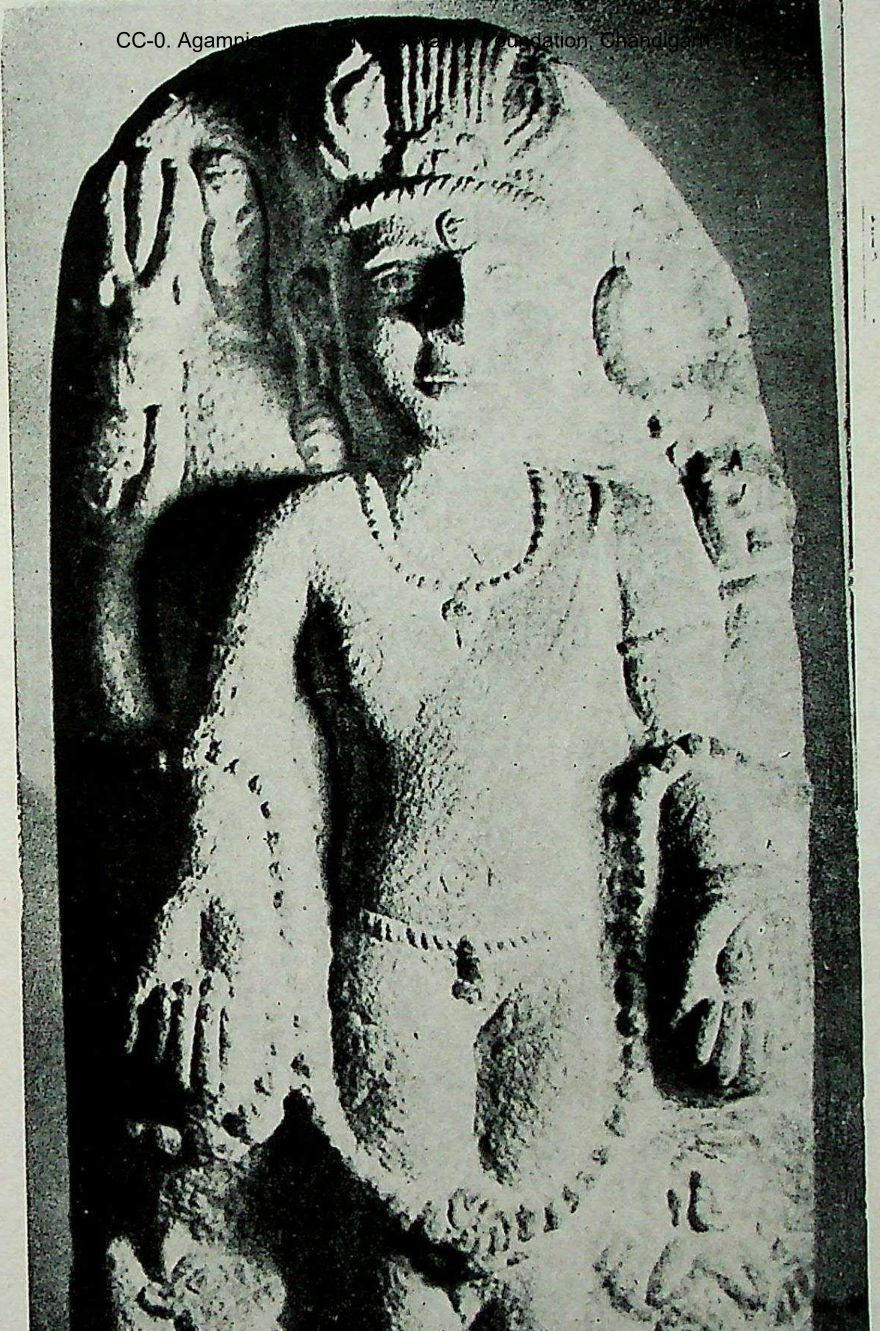


Fig. 32

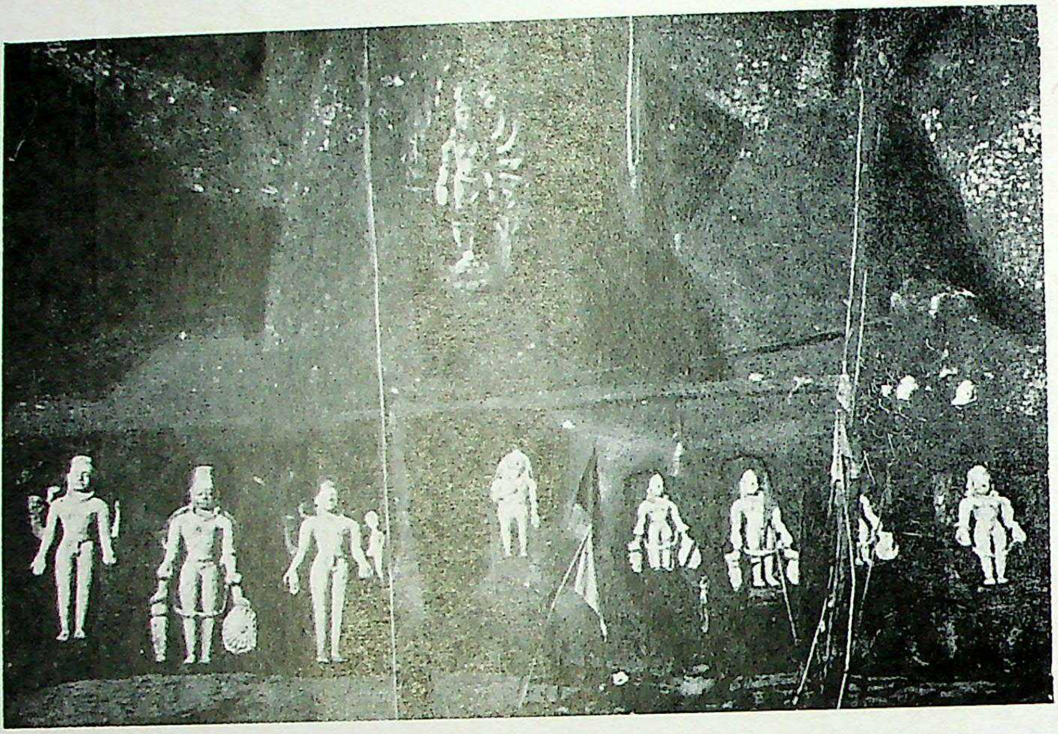


Fig. 33

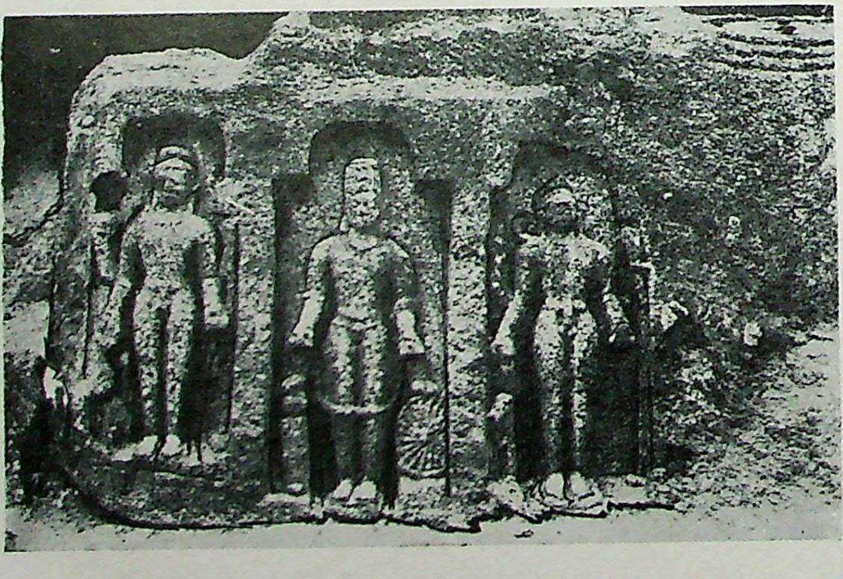


Fig. 34

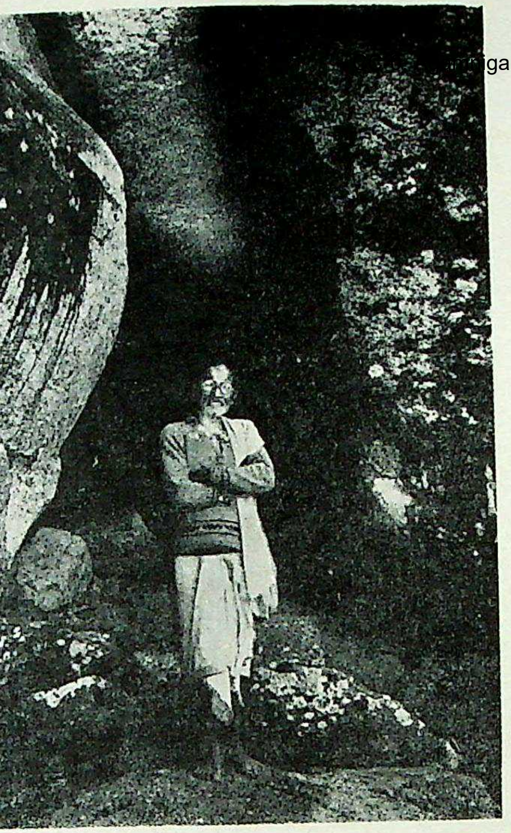


Fig. 35

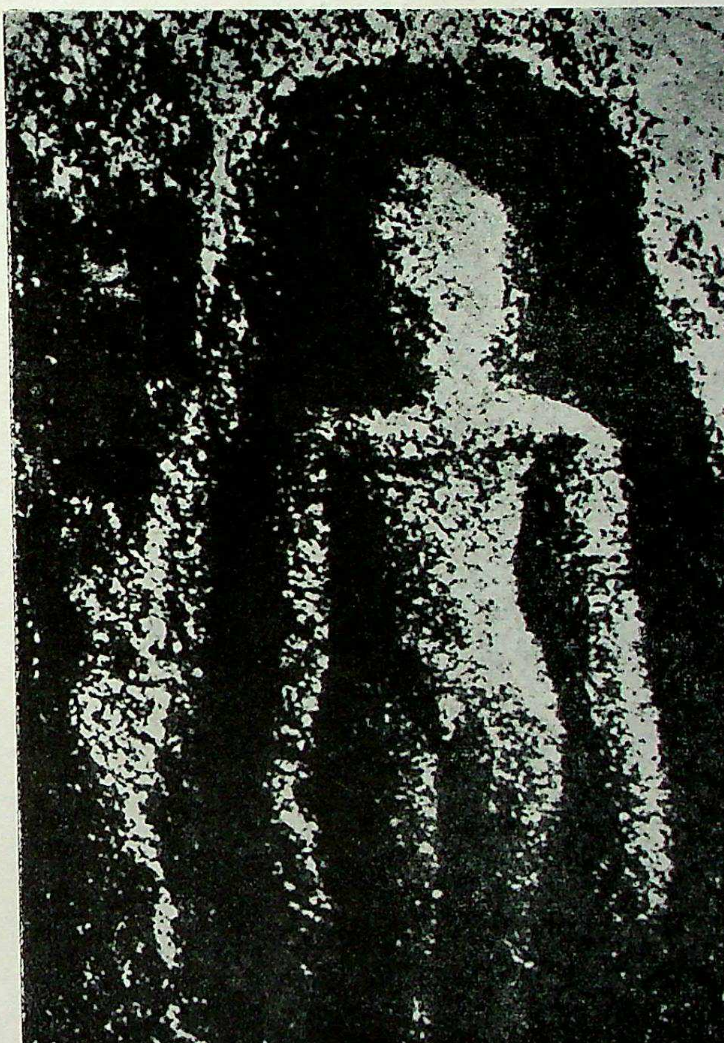


Fig. 36

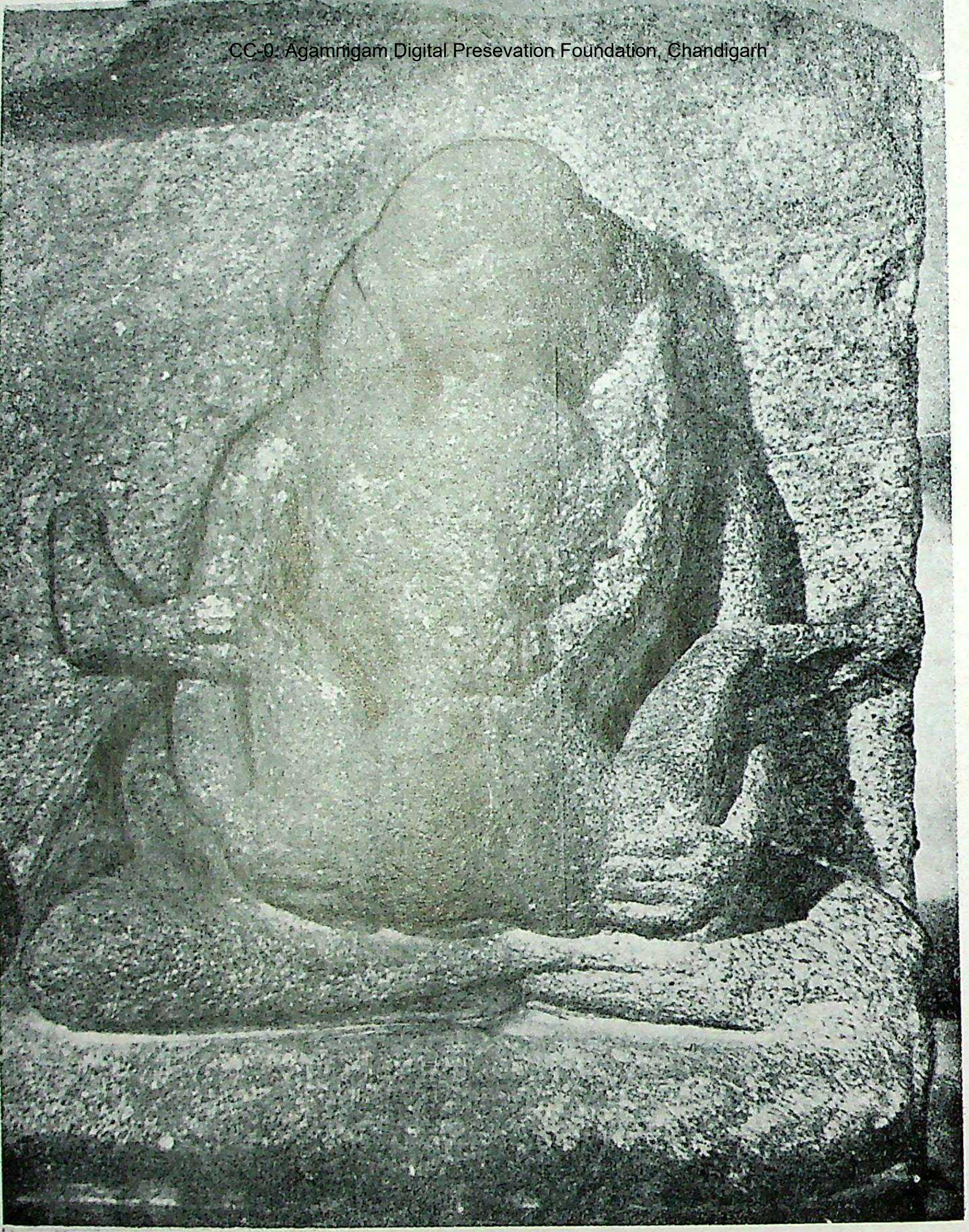
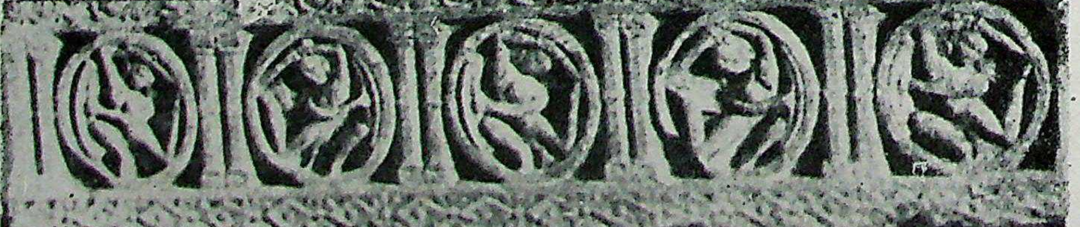


Fig. 37



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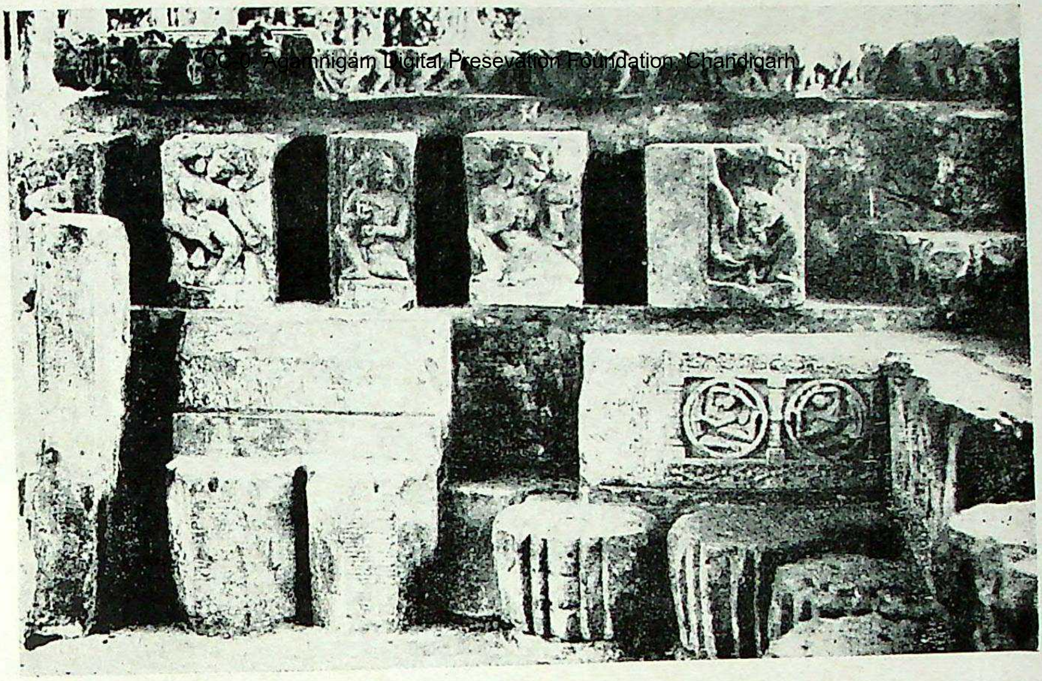
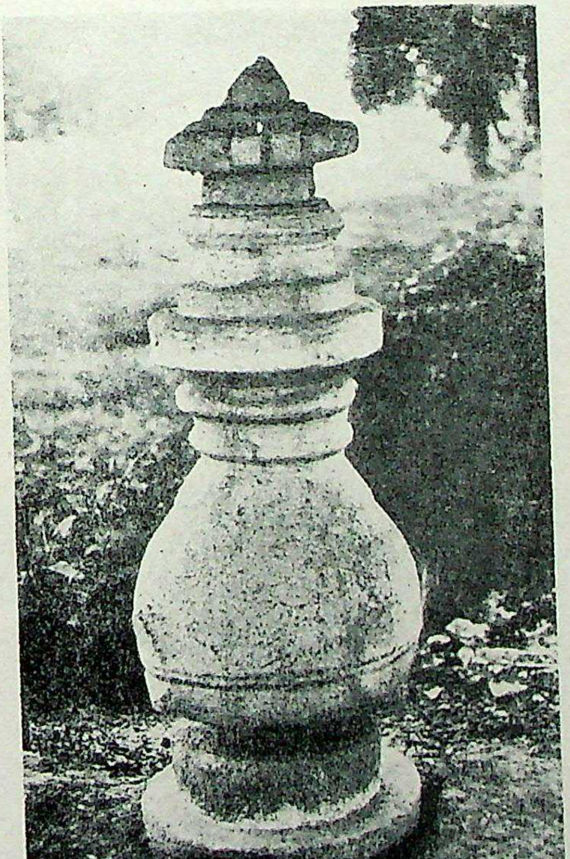


Fig. 39



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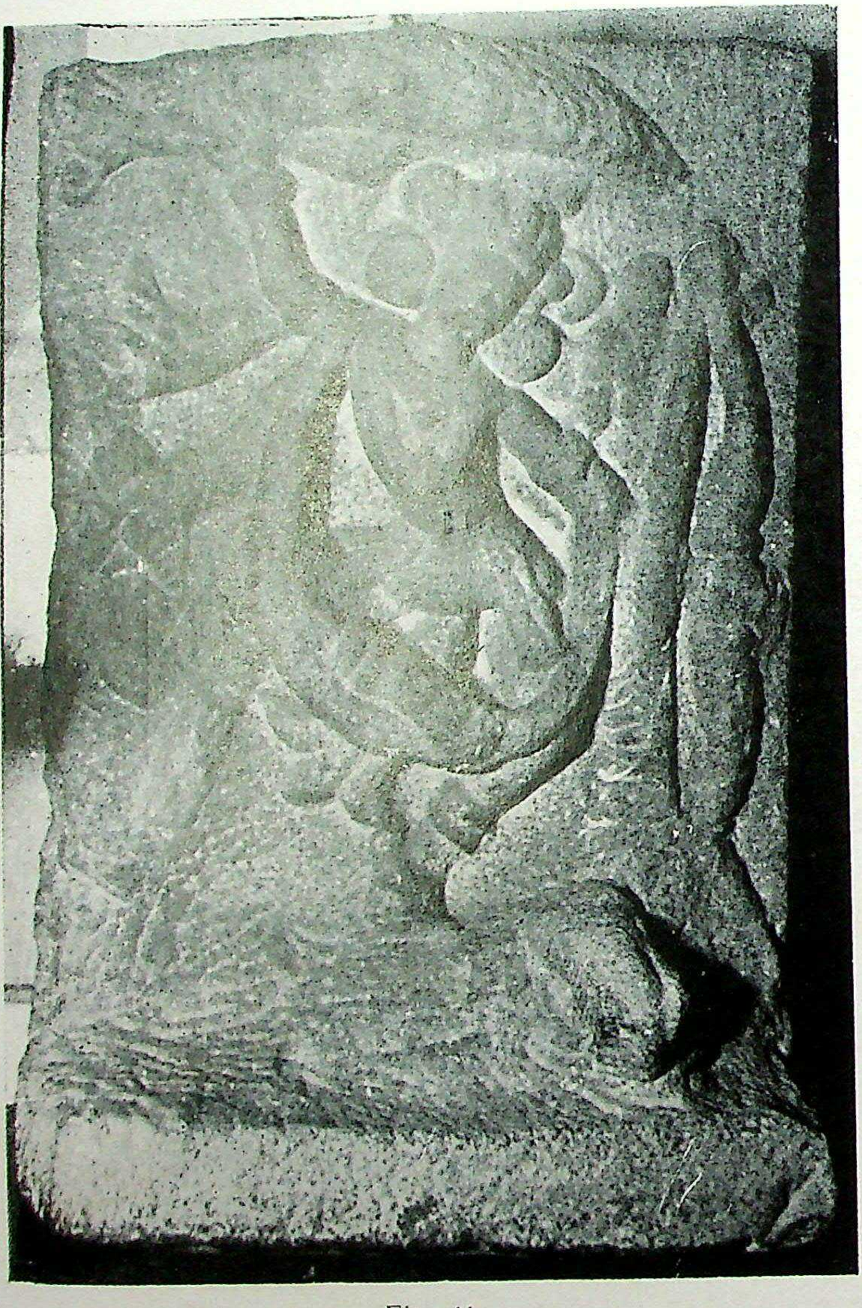

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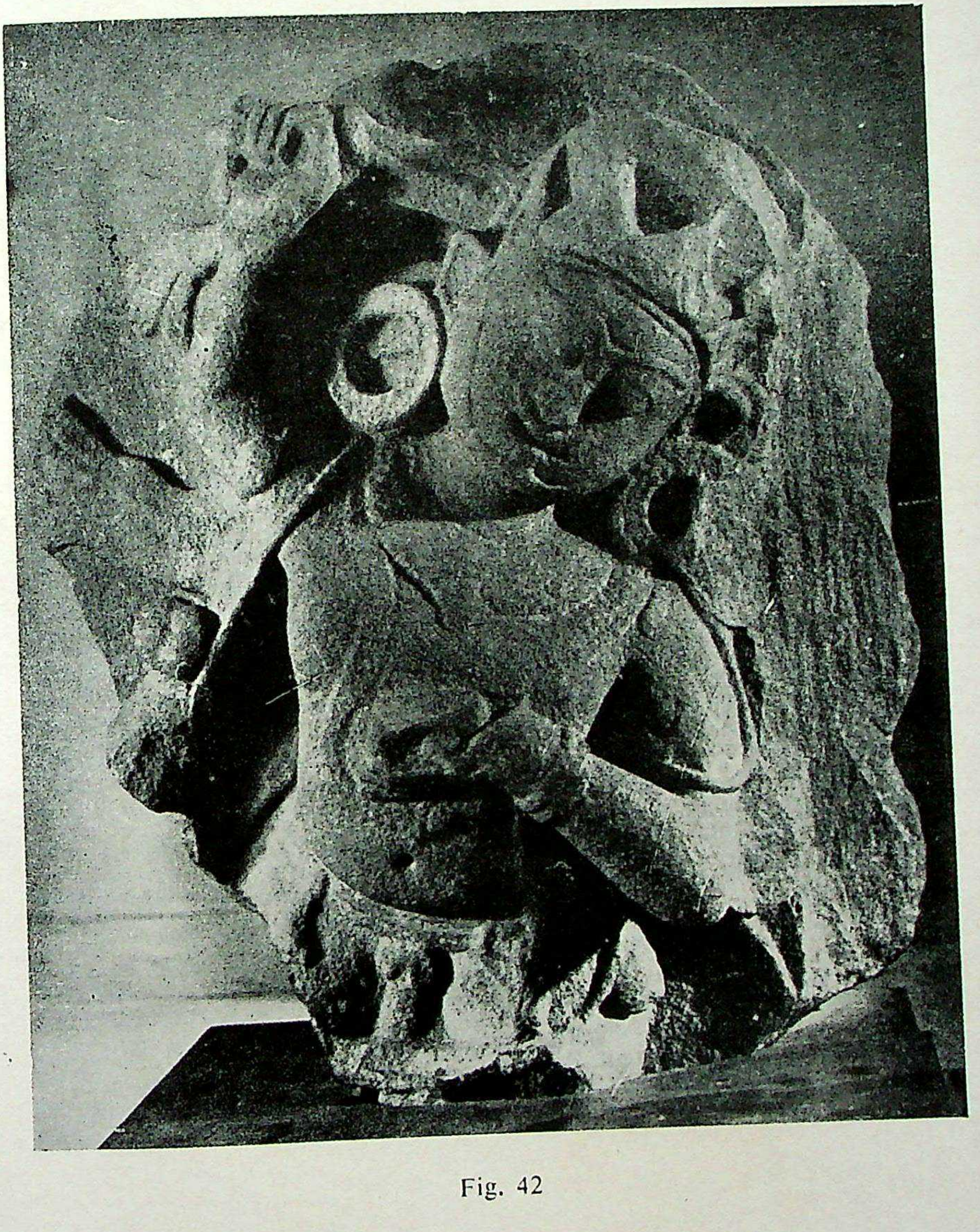

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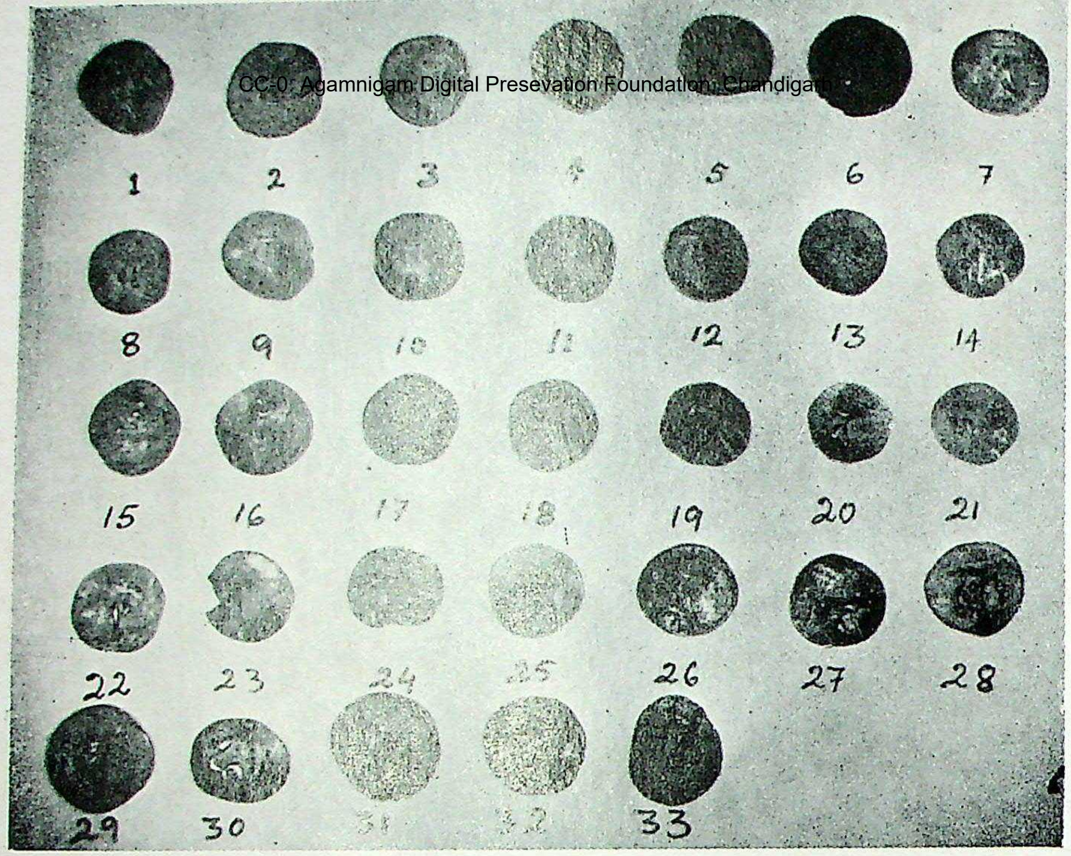
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Fig. 43 ↑

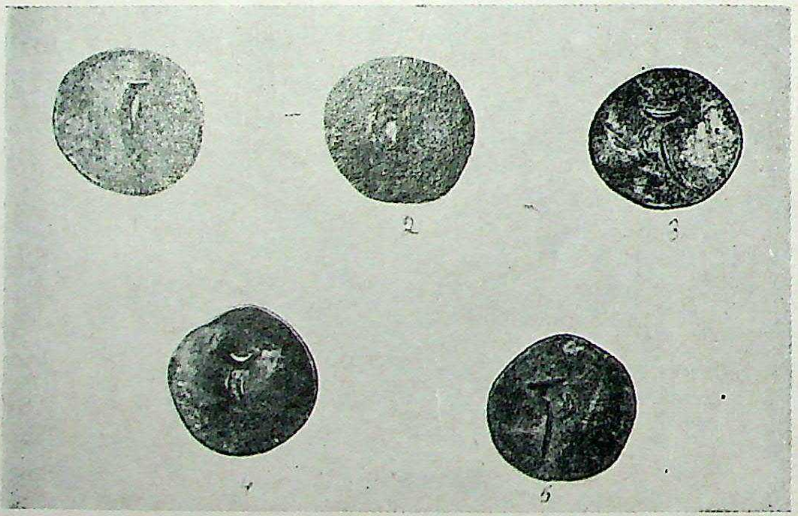


Fig. 44

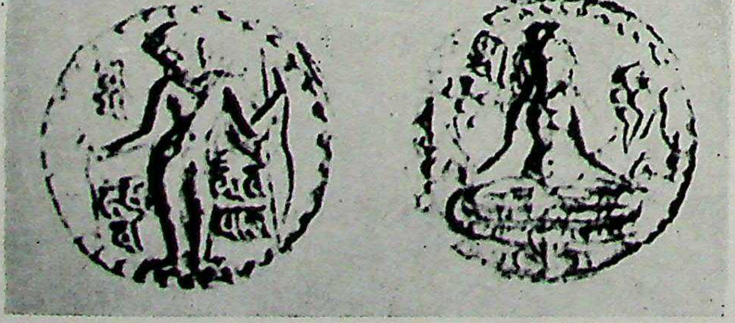


Fig. 45

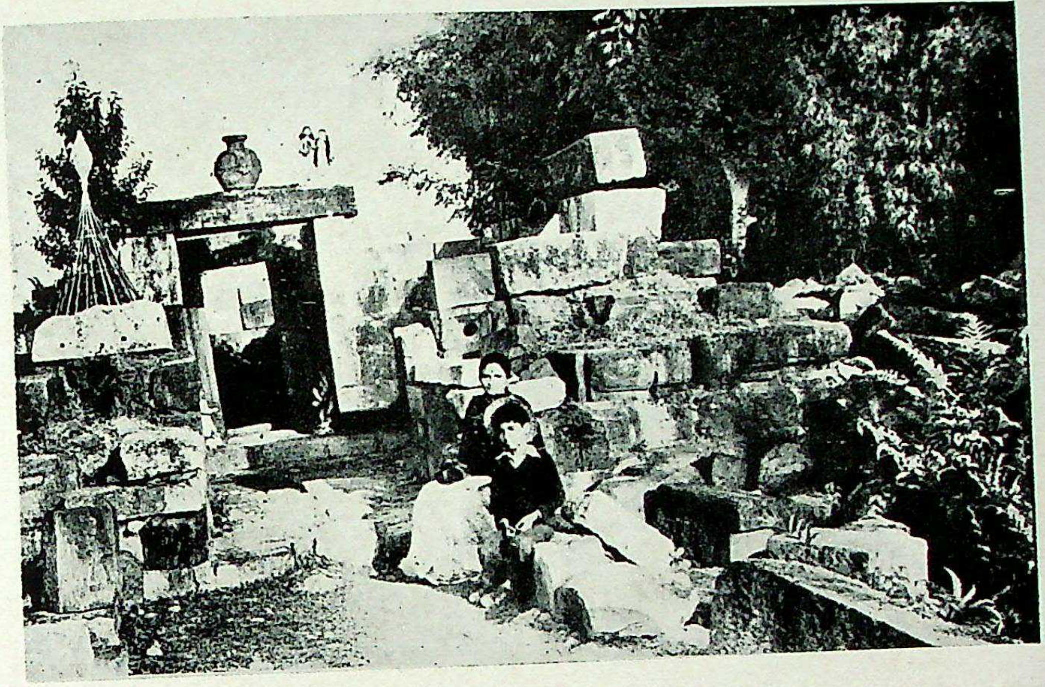


Fig. 46

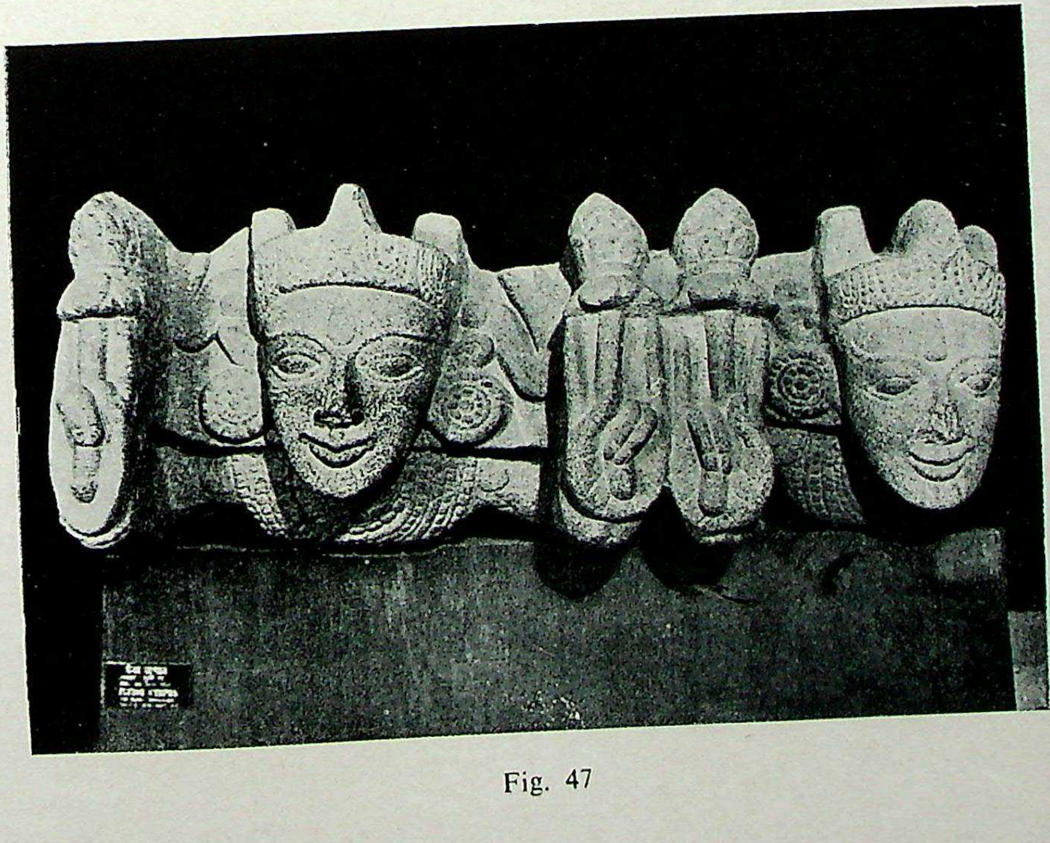
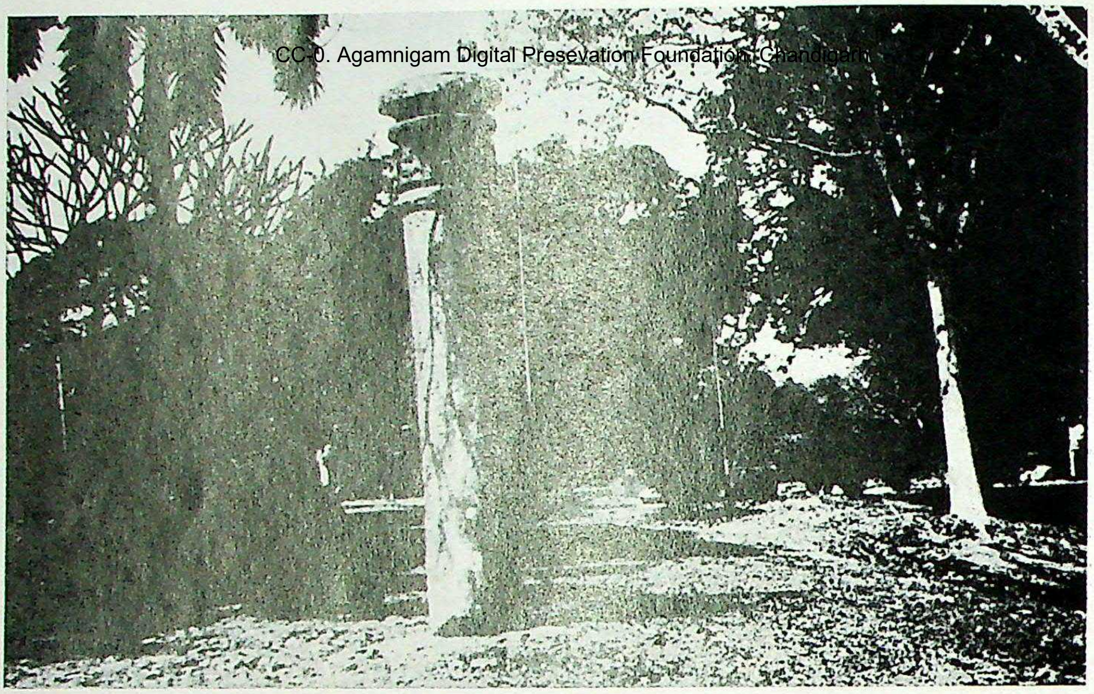


Fig. 47



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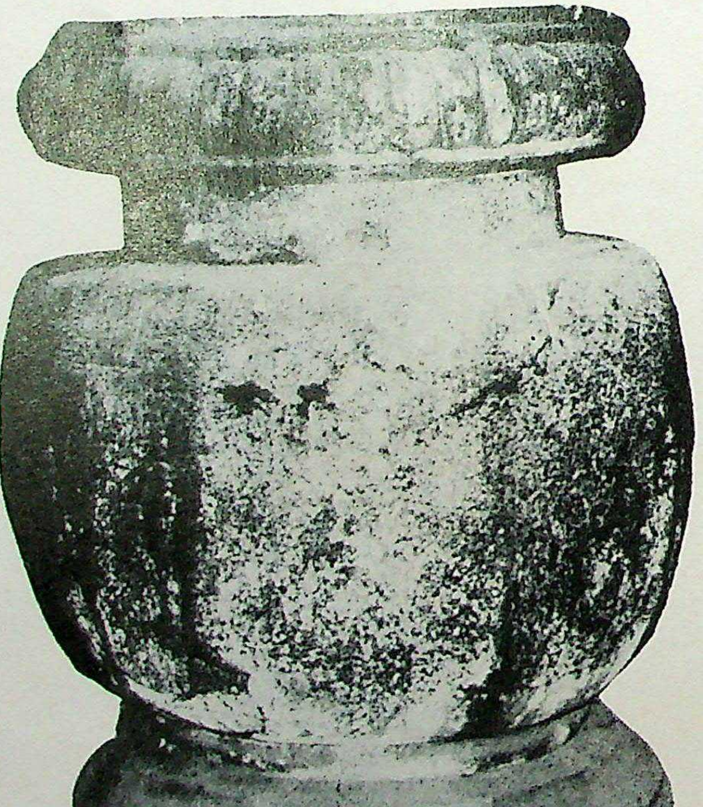


Fig. 49

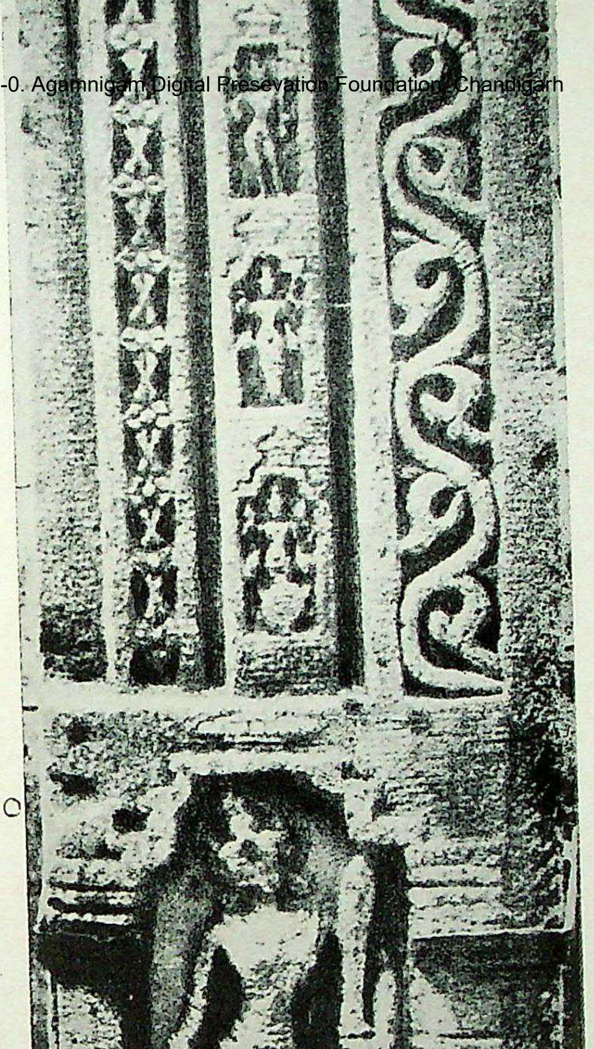


Fig. 50

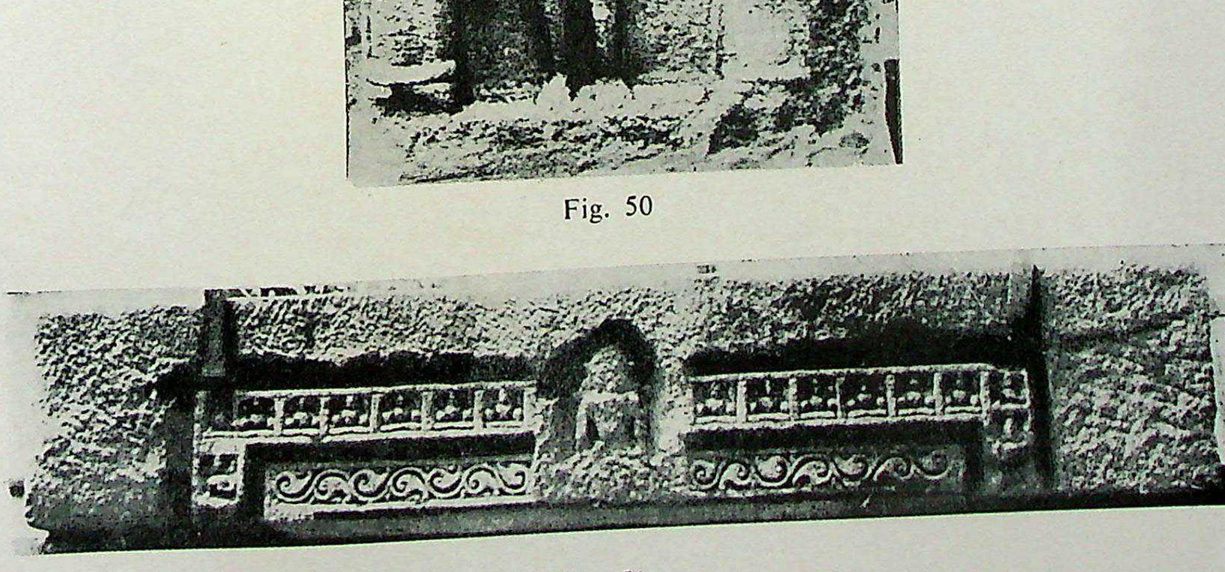


Fig. 51

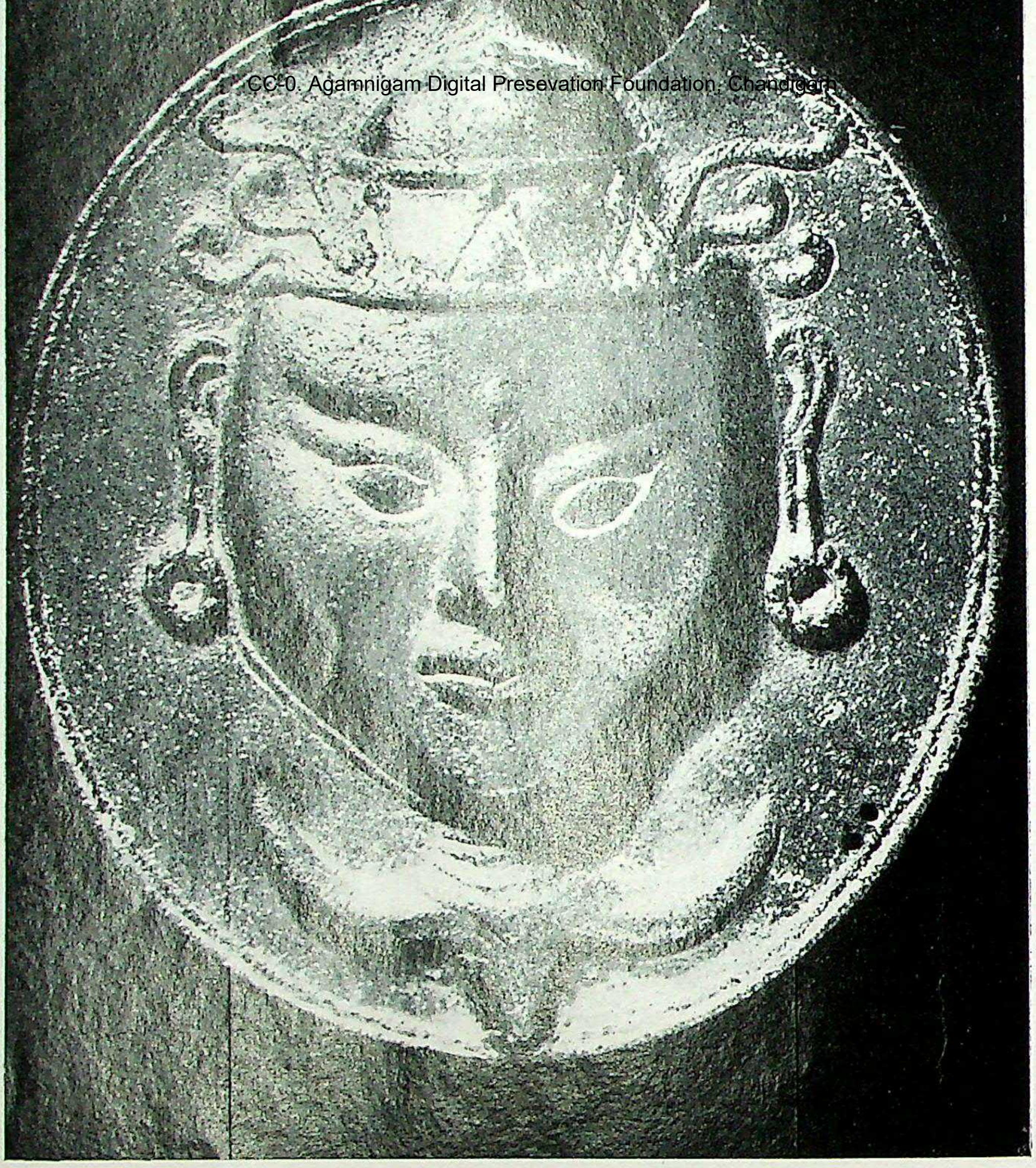
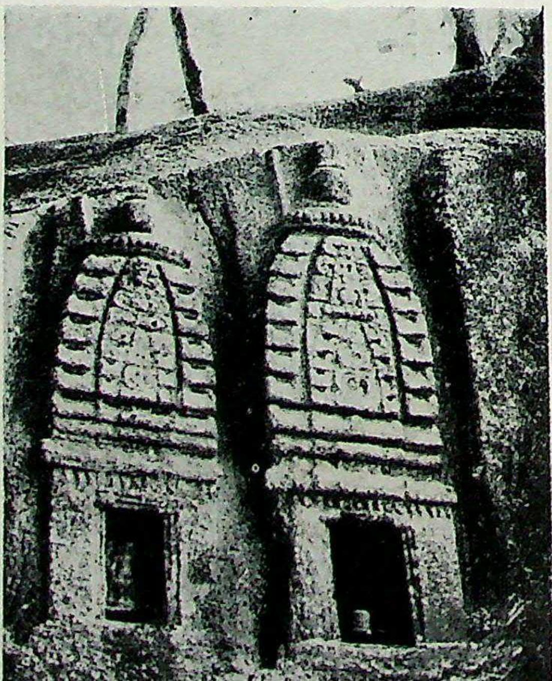


Fig. 52↑

Fig. 53→



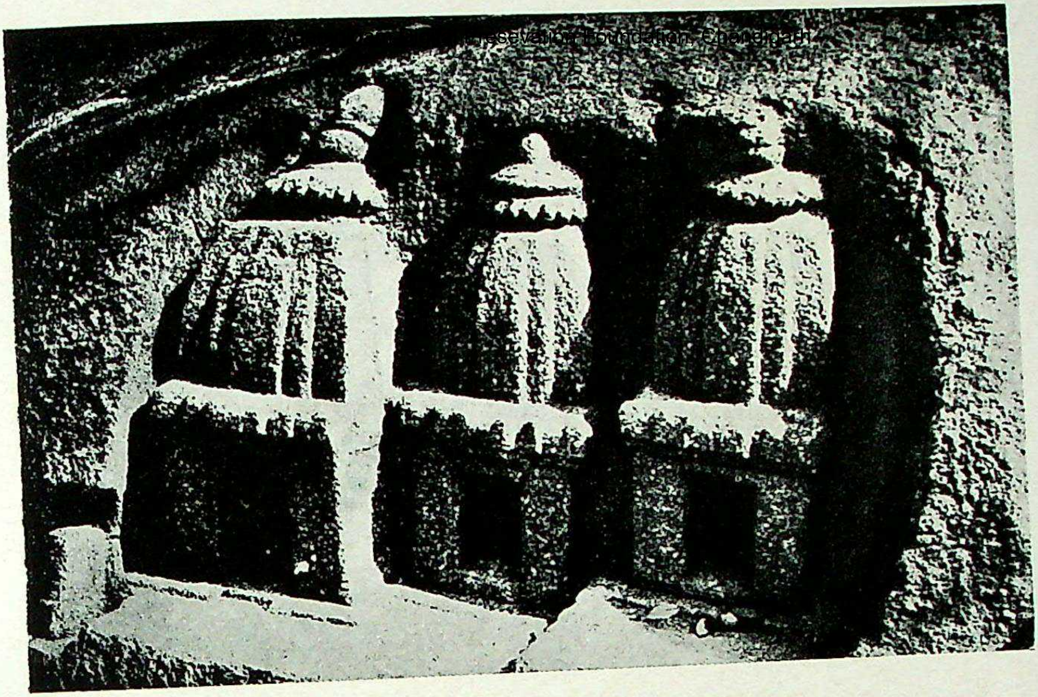


Fig. 54

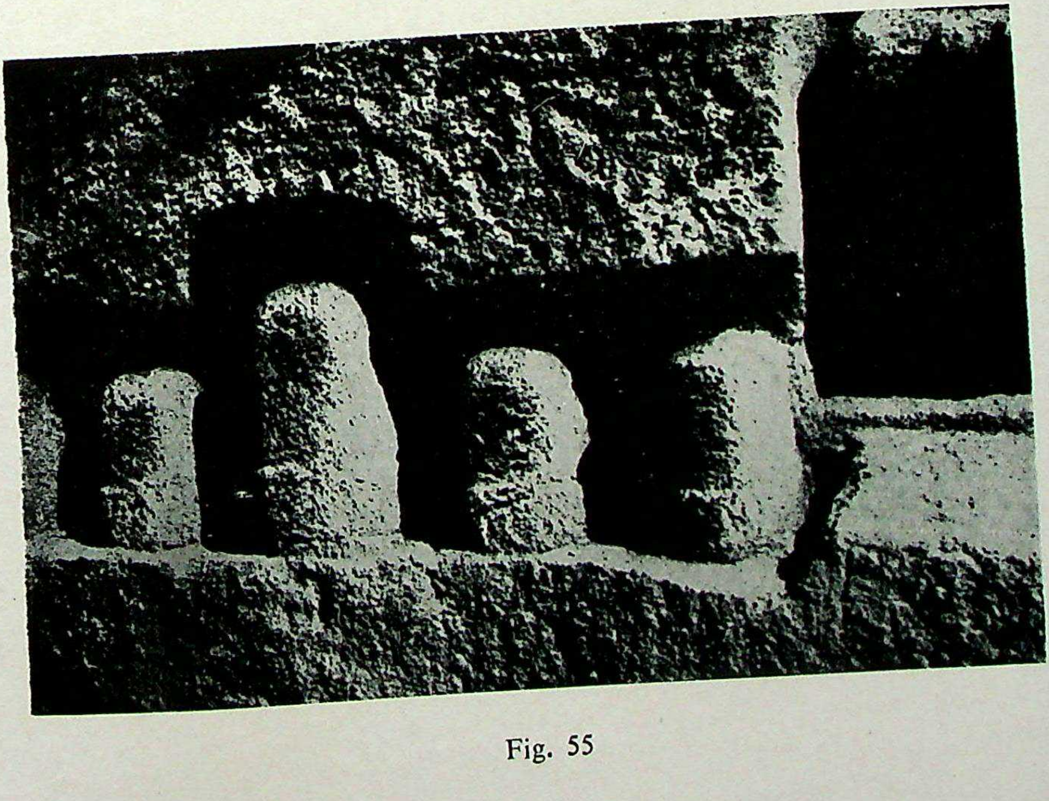


Fig. 55

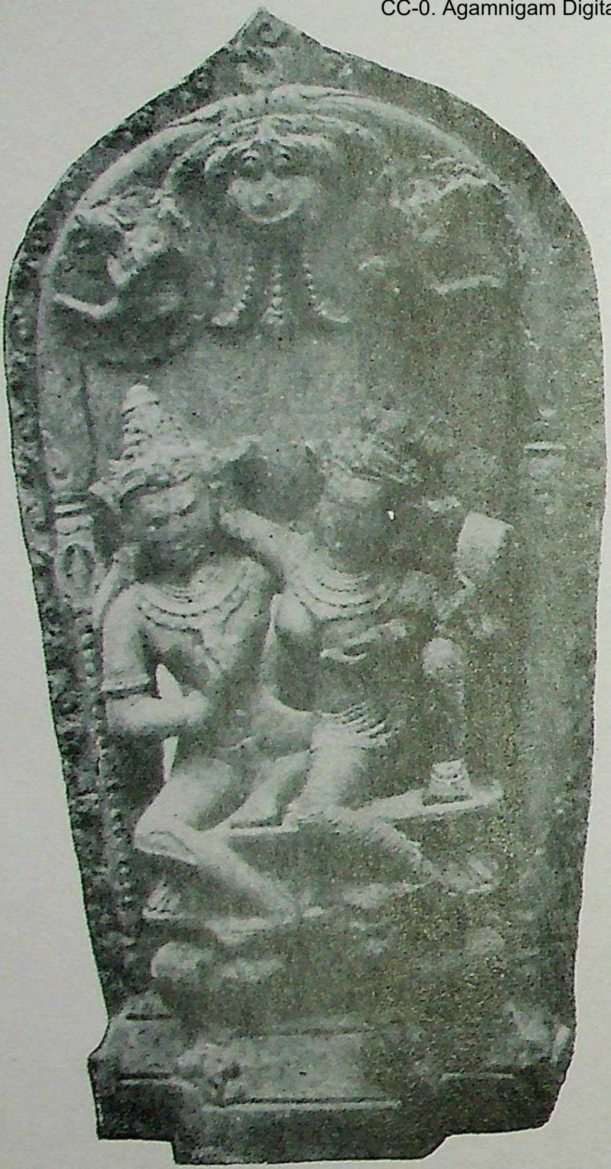


Fig. 56

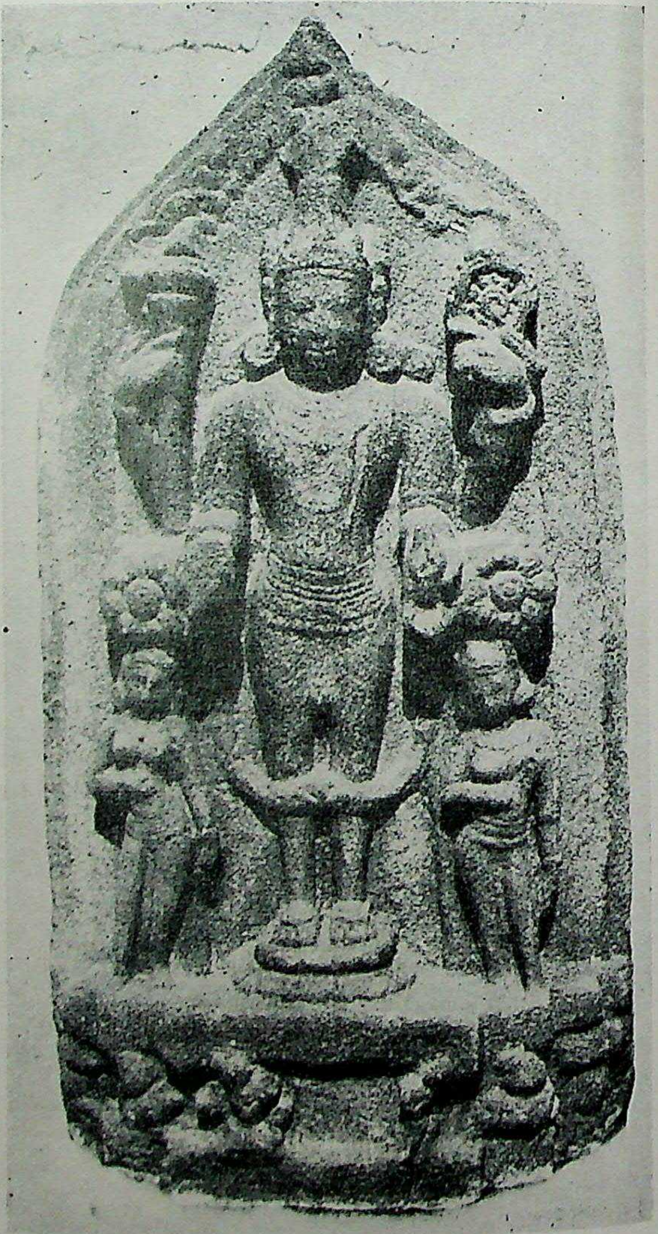
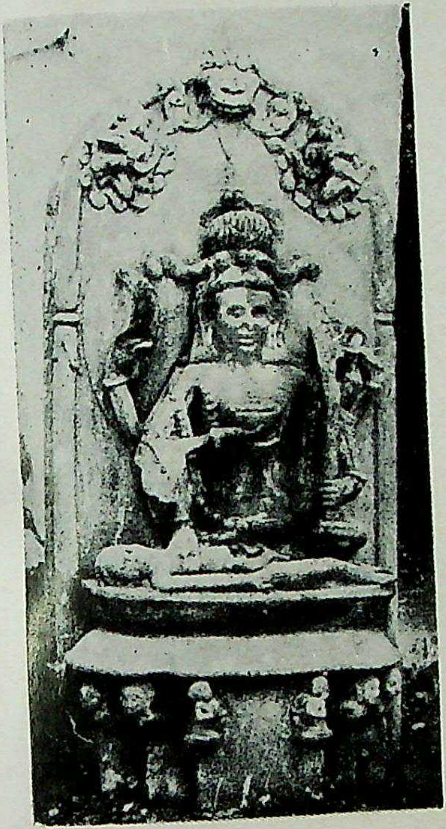


Fig. 57



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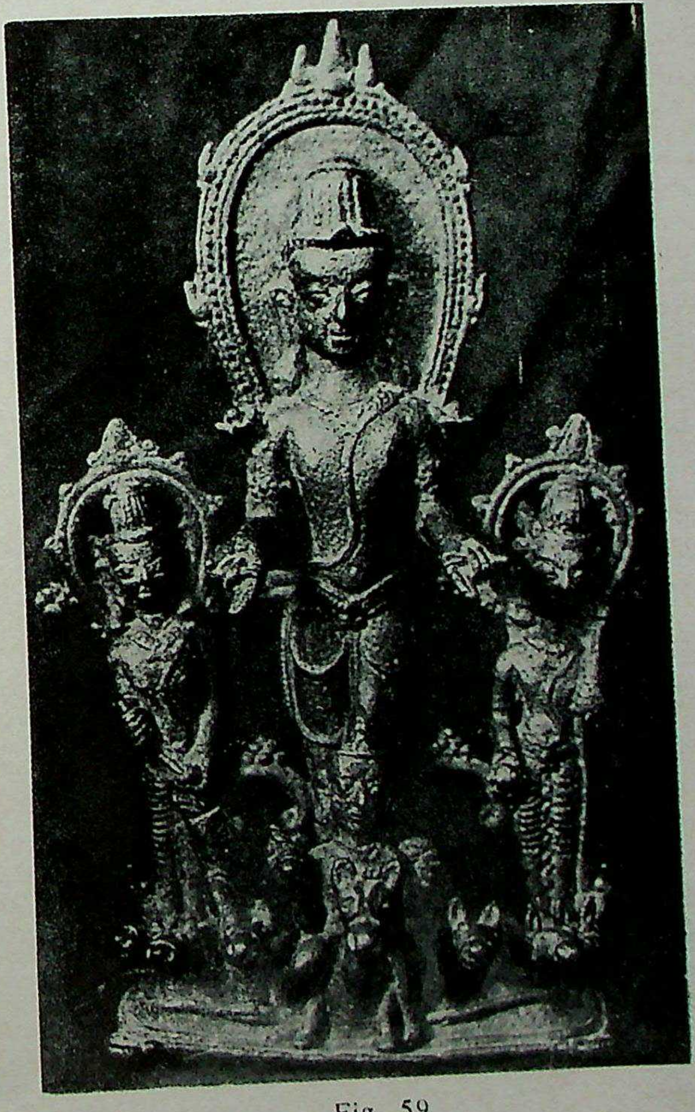

Fig. 59

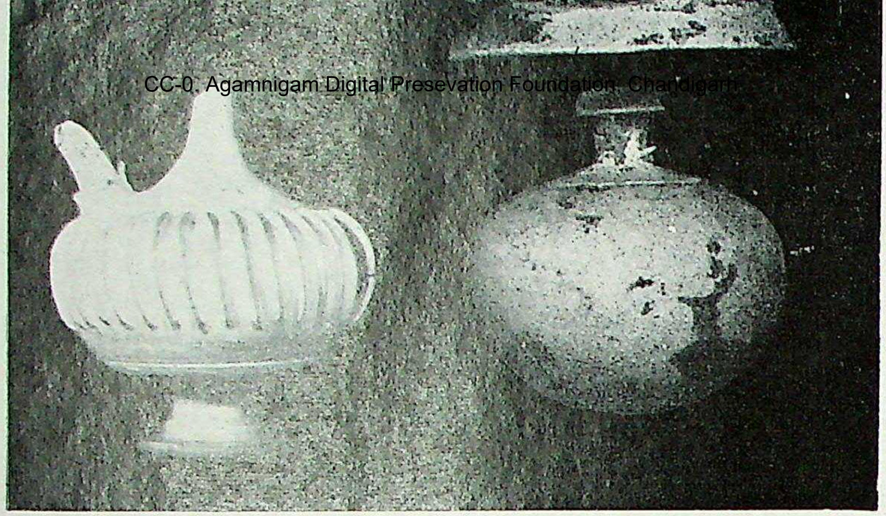

Fig. 60

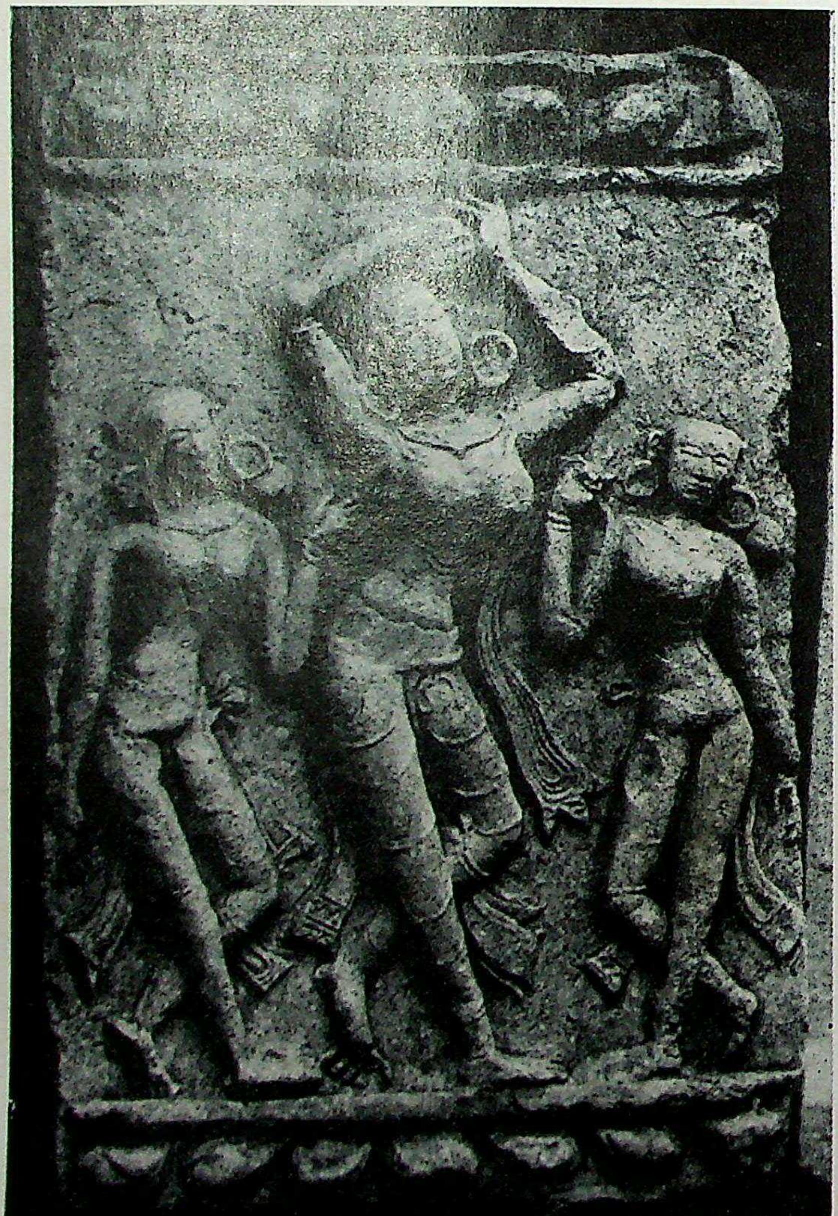

Fig. 61

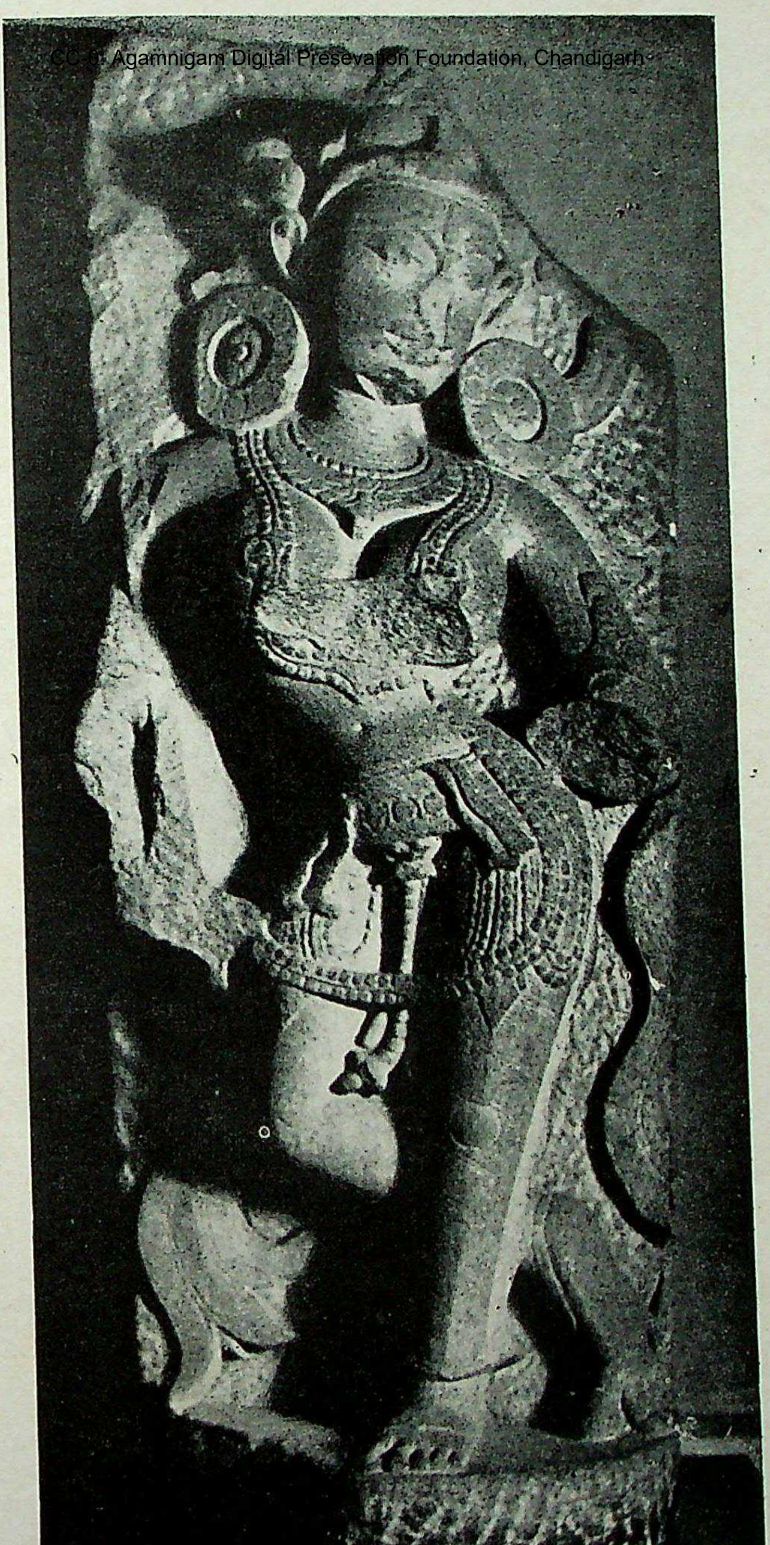

Fig. 62

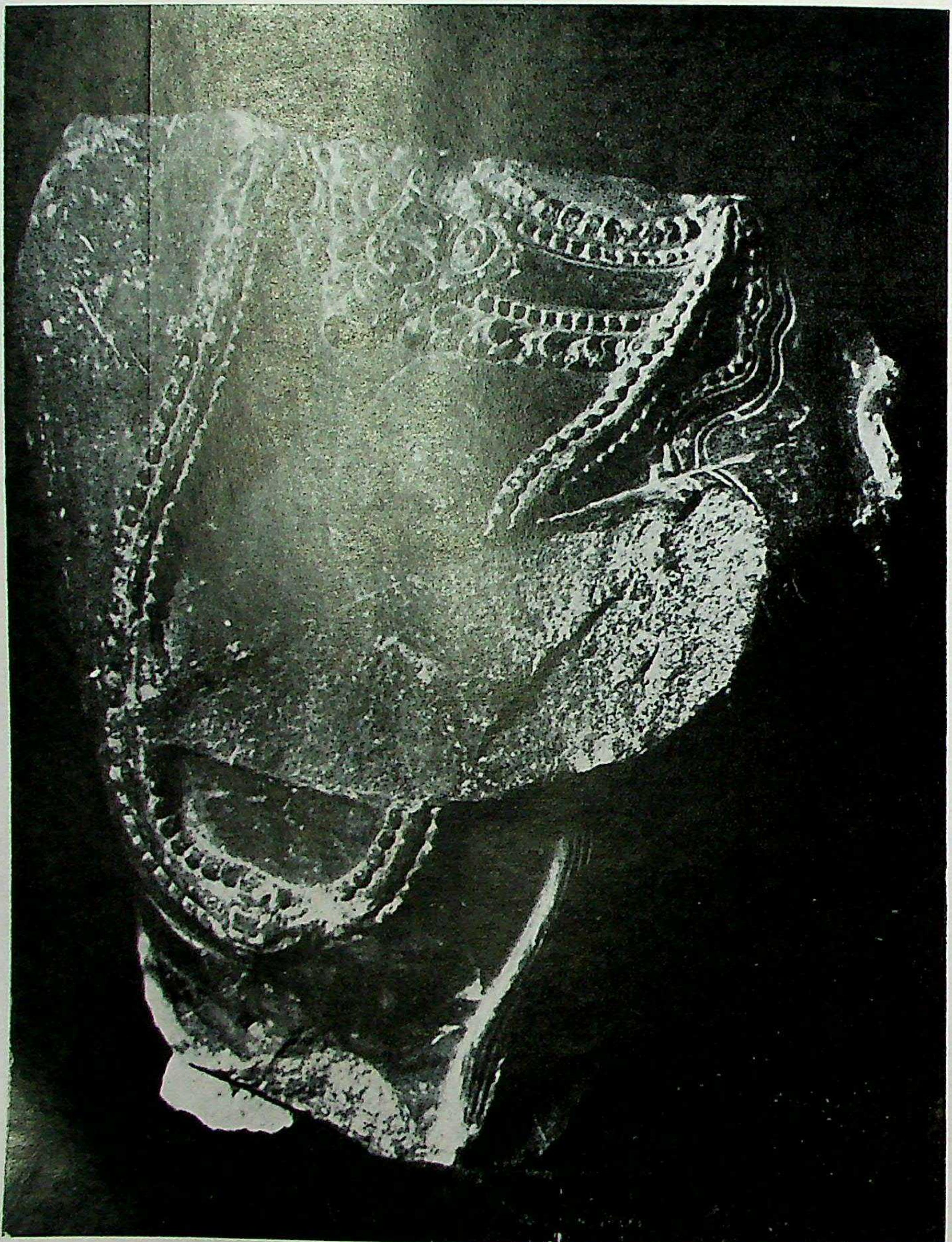

Fig. 63

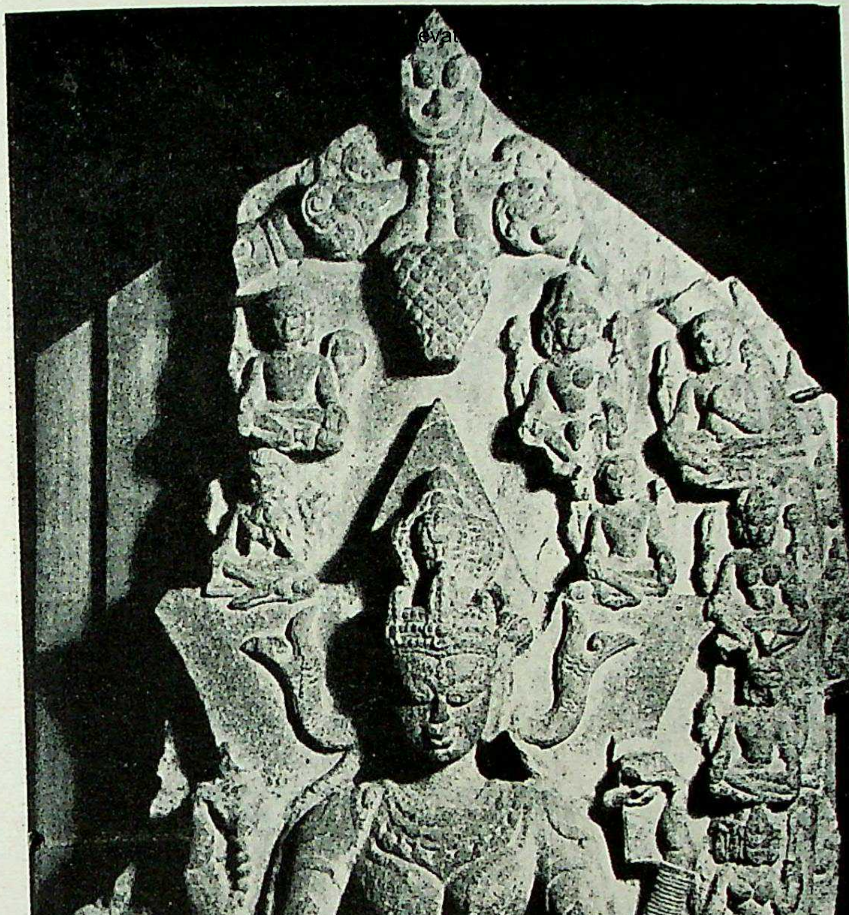

Fig. 64

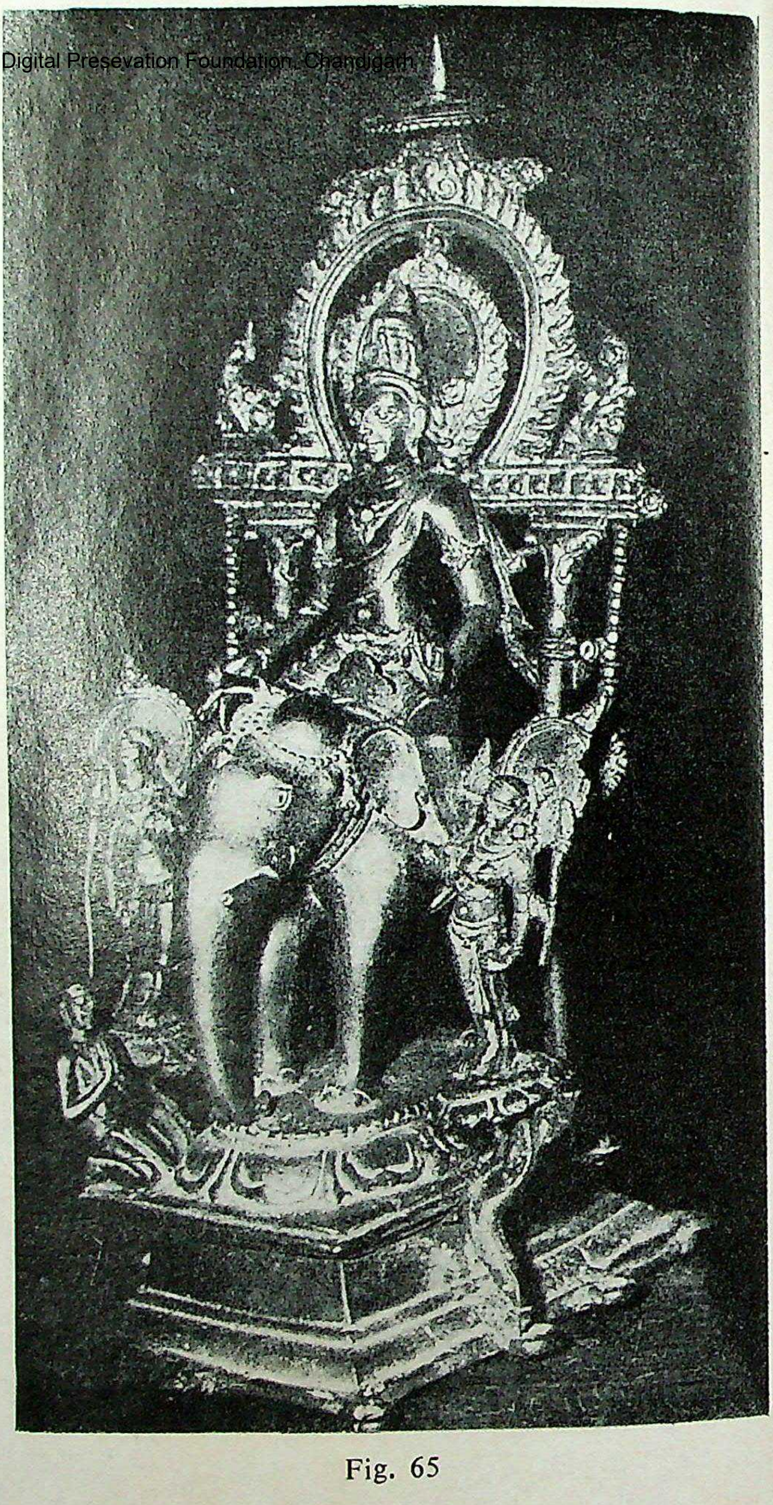

Fig. 65

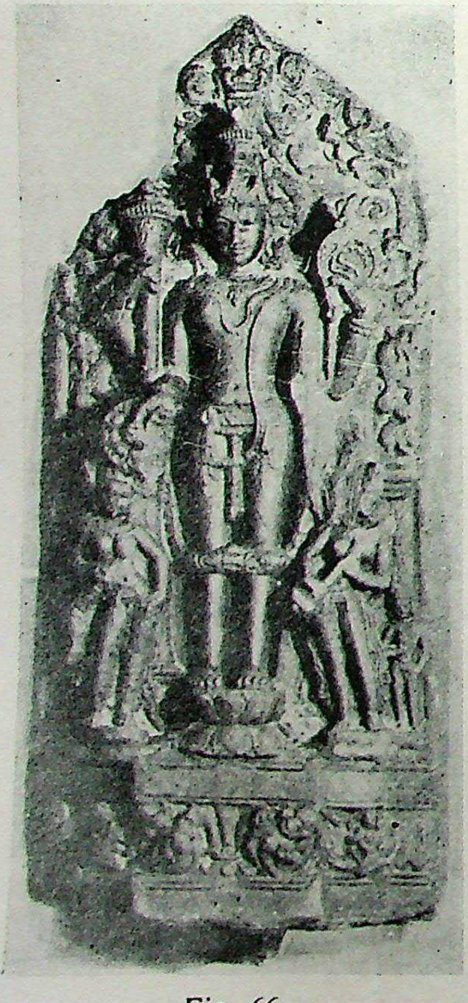

Fig. 66

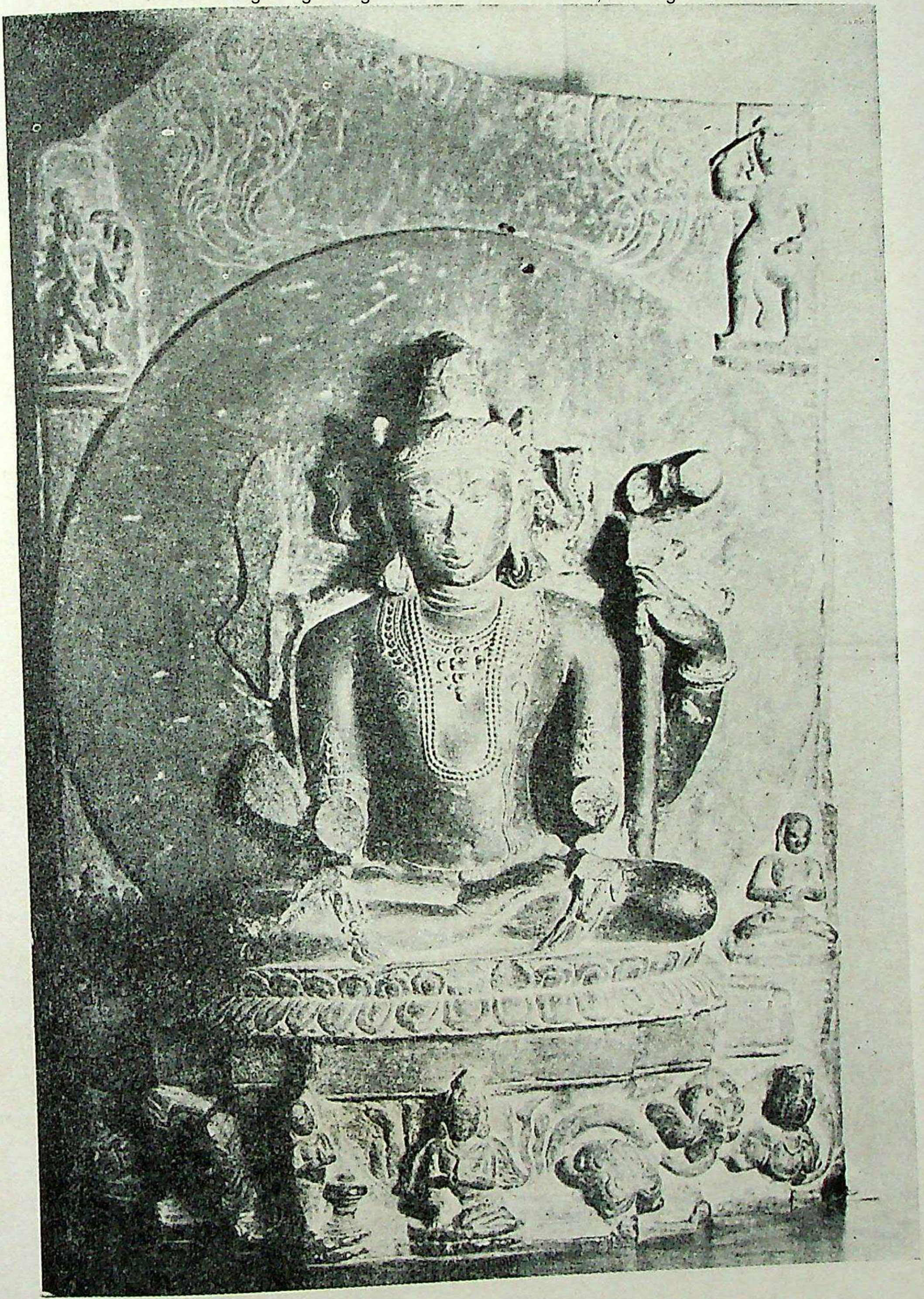

Fig. 67

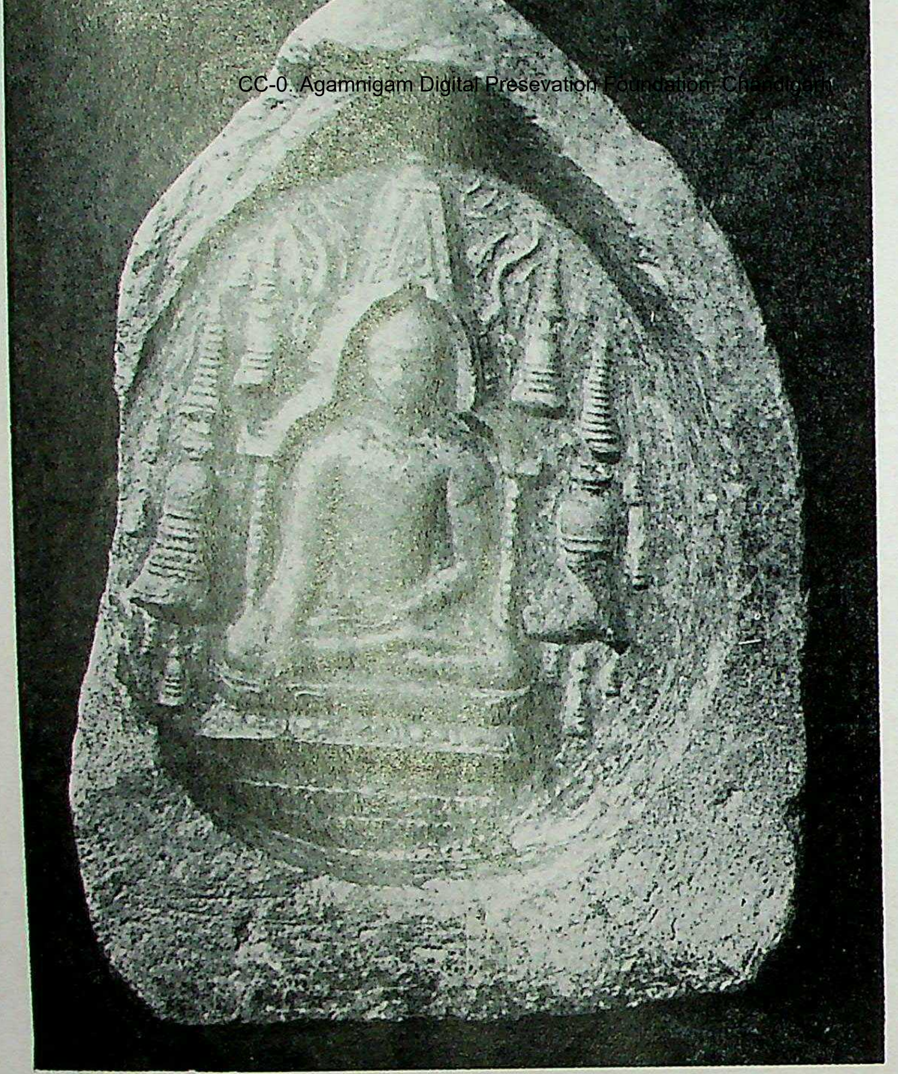

Fig. 68

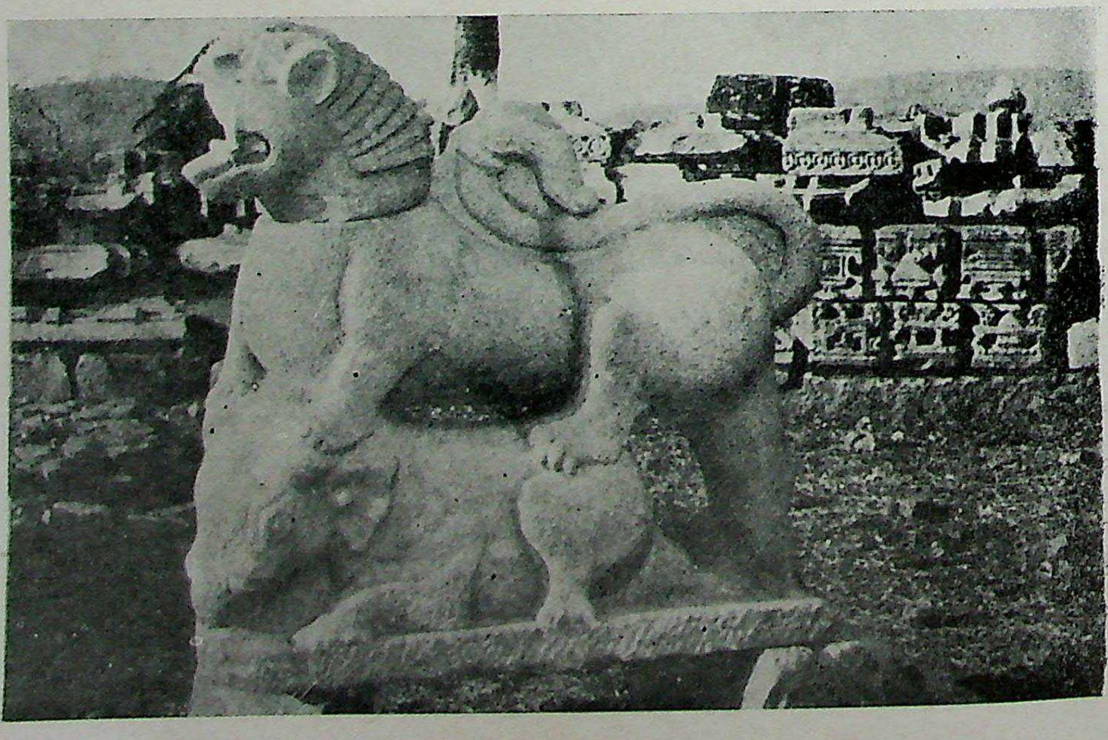

Fig. 69

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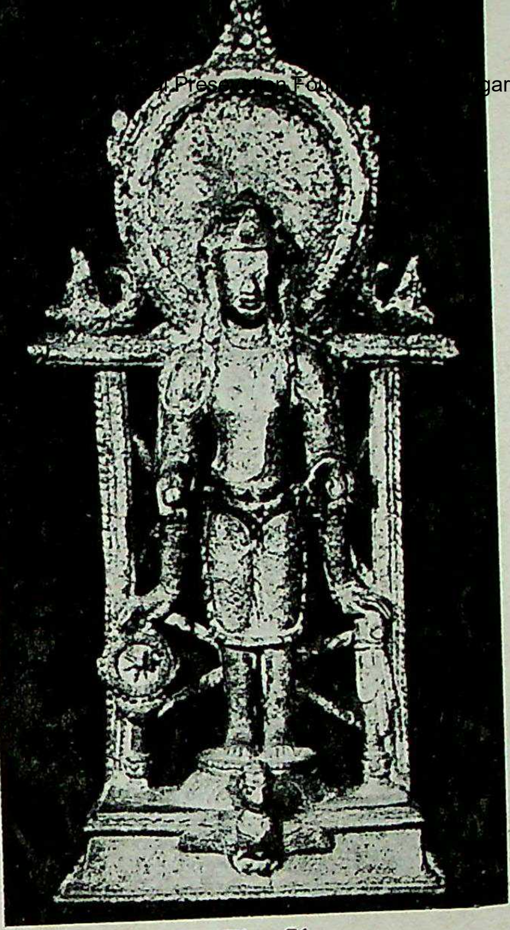

Fig. 71

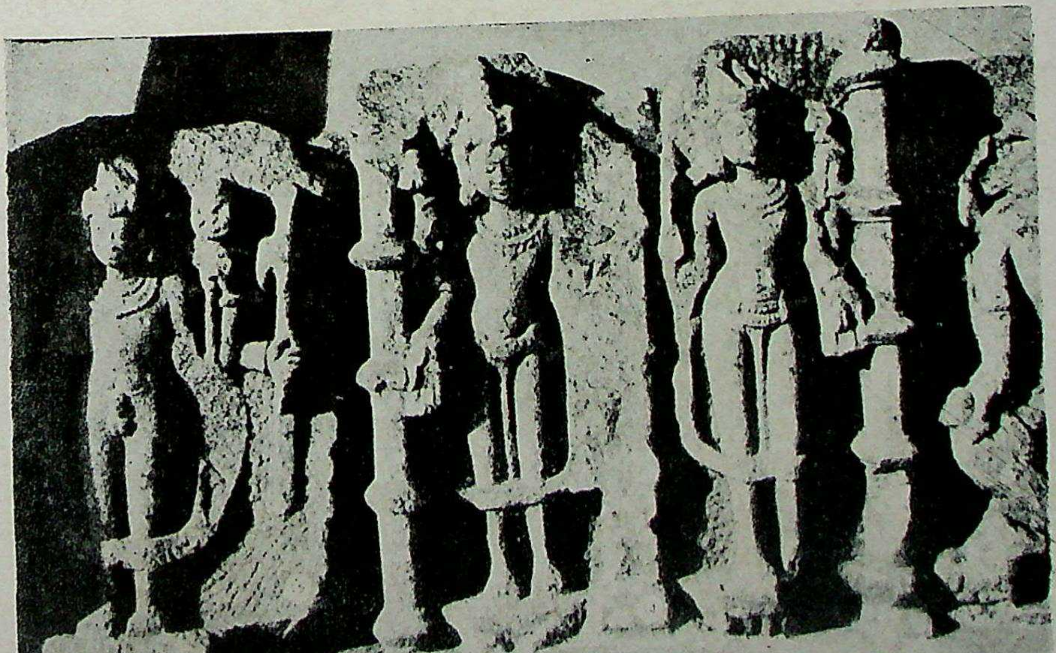

Fig. 70

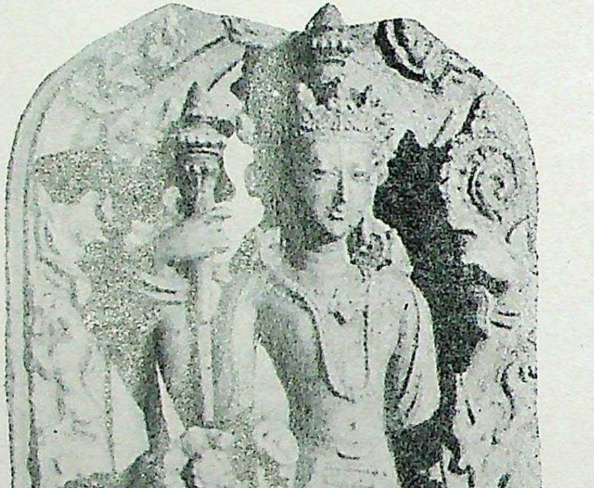

Fig. 72

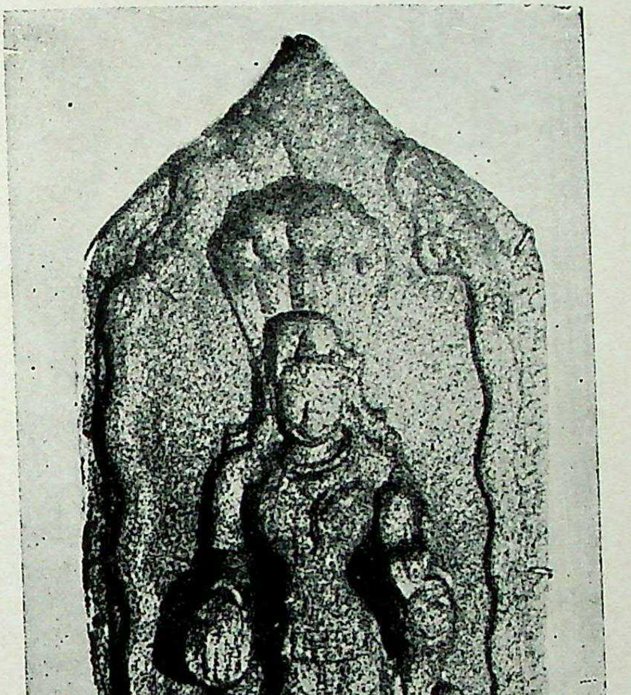

Fig. 73

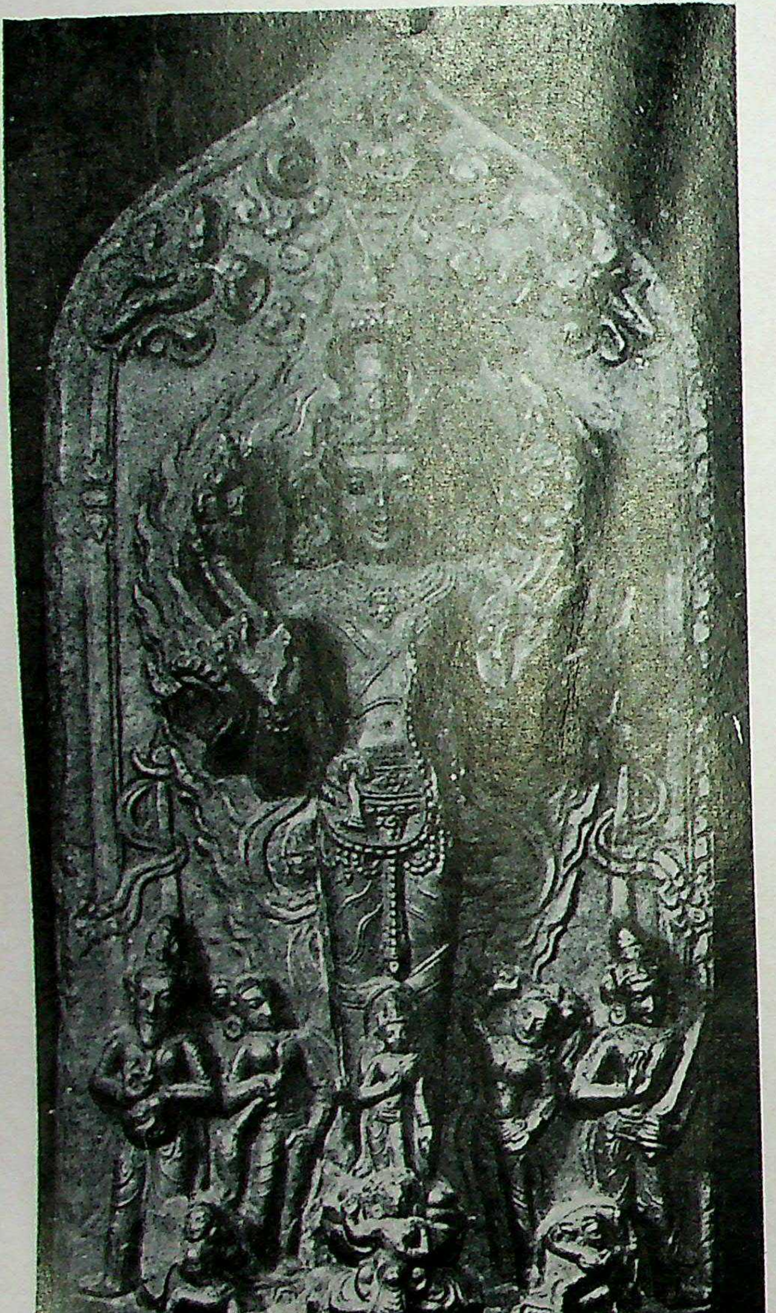

Fig. 75

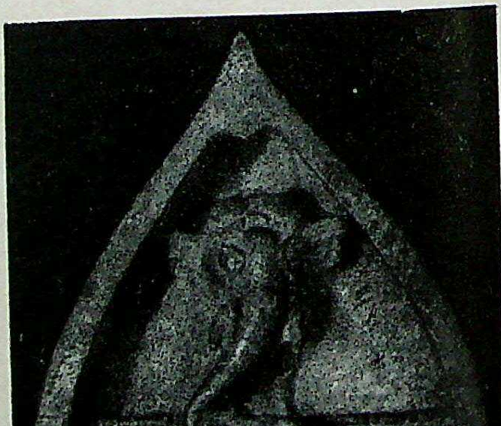

Fig. 74

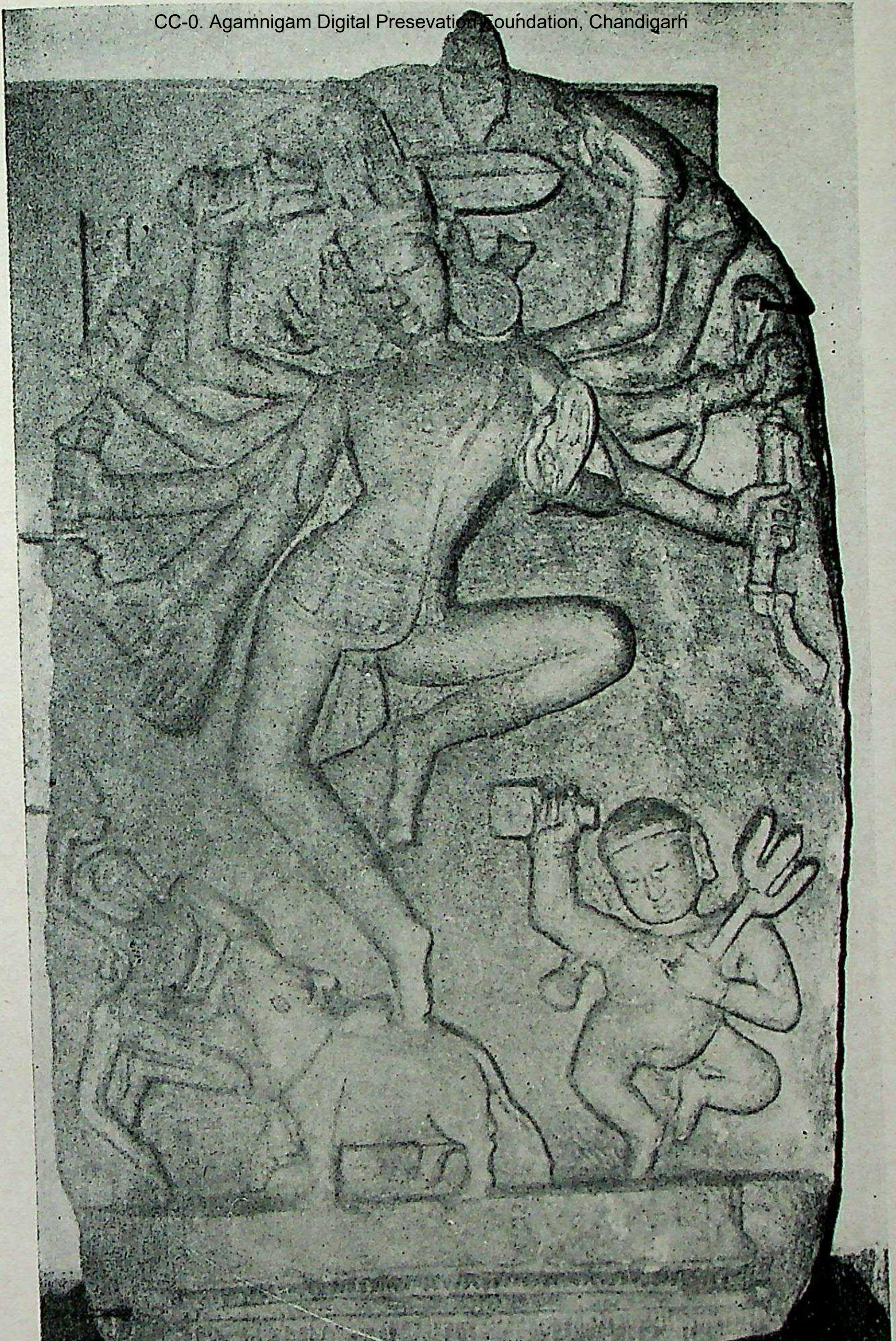

Fig. 76

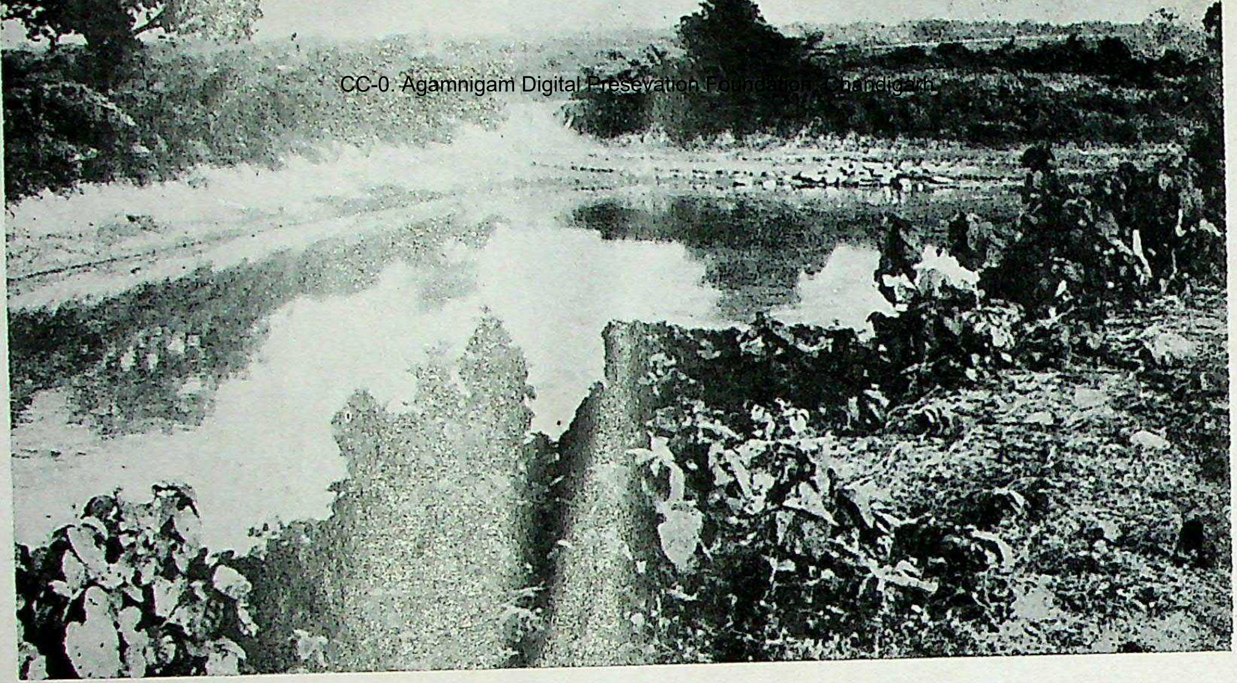

Fig. 77 ↑

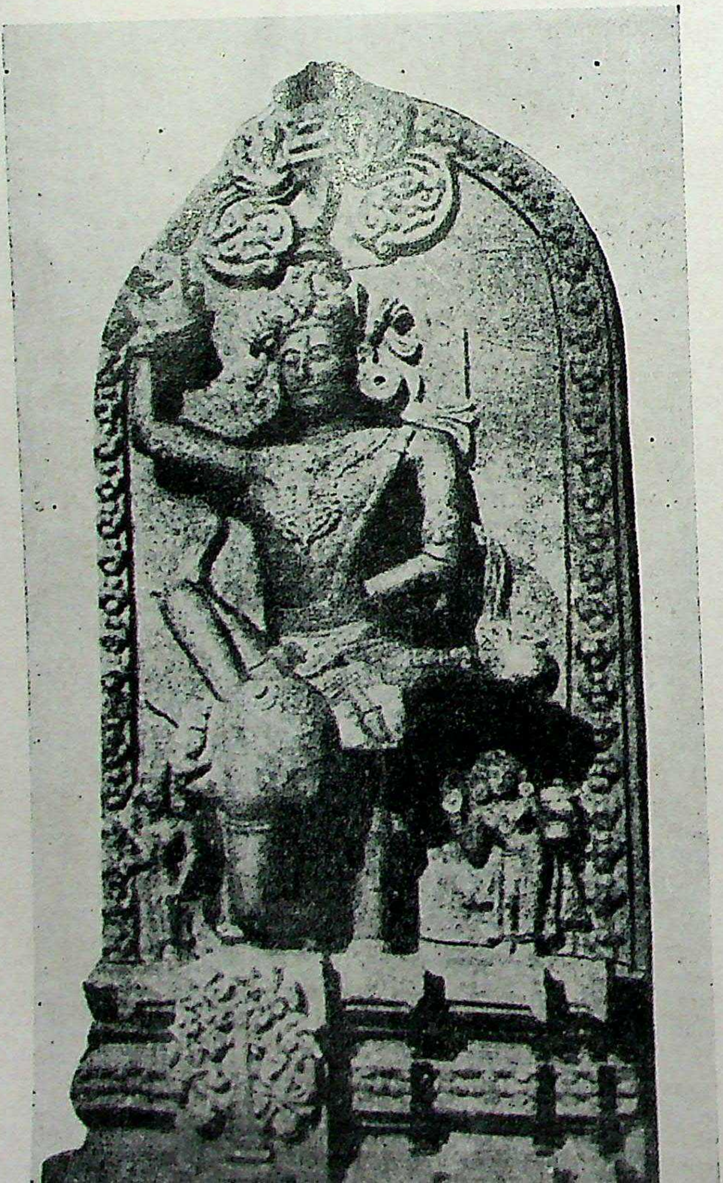

Fig. 78

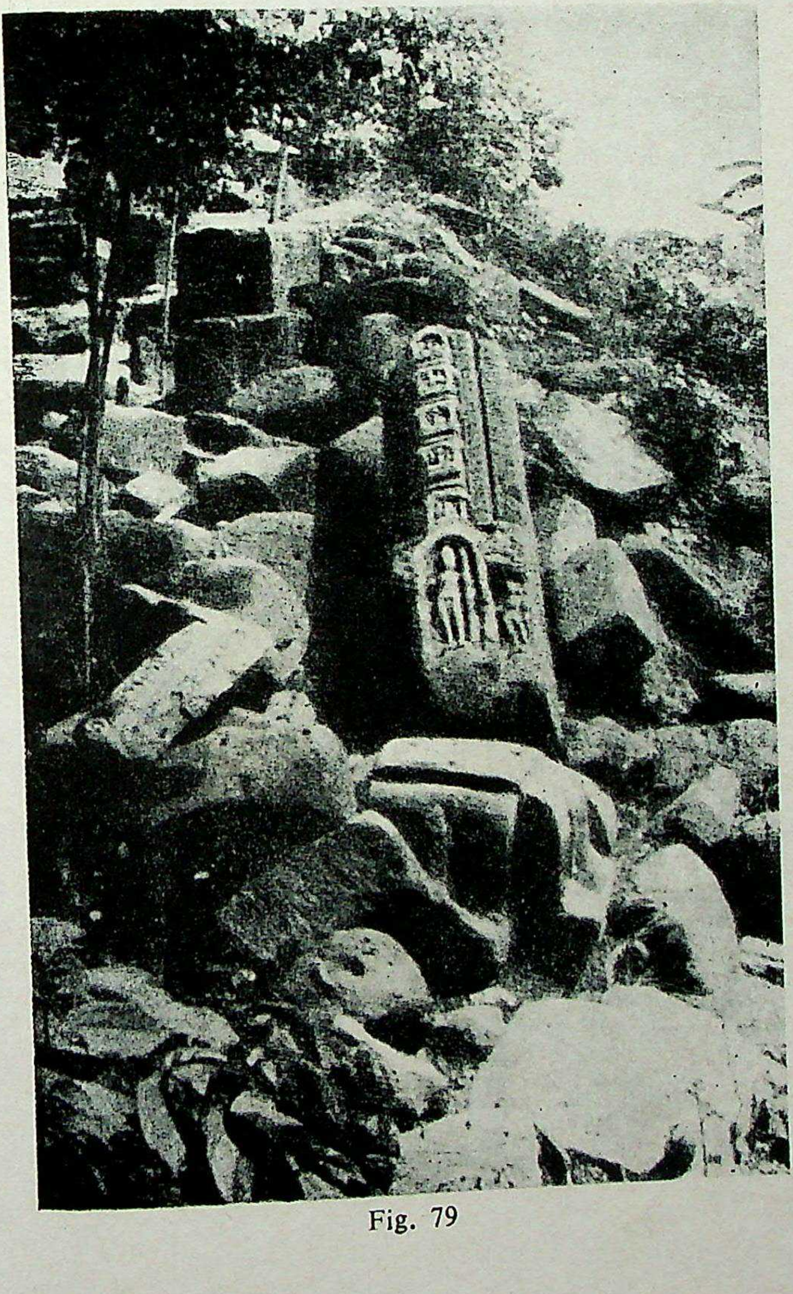

Fig. 79

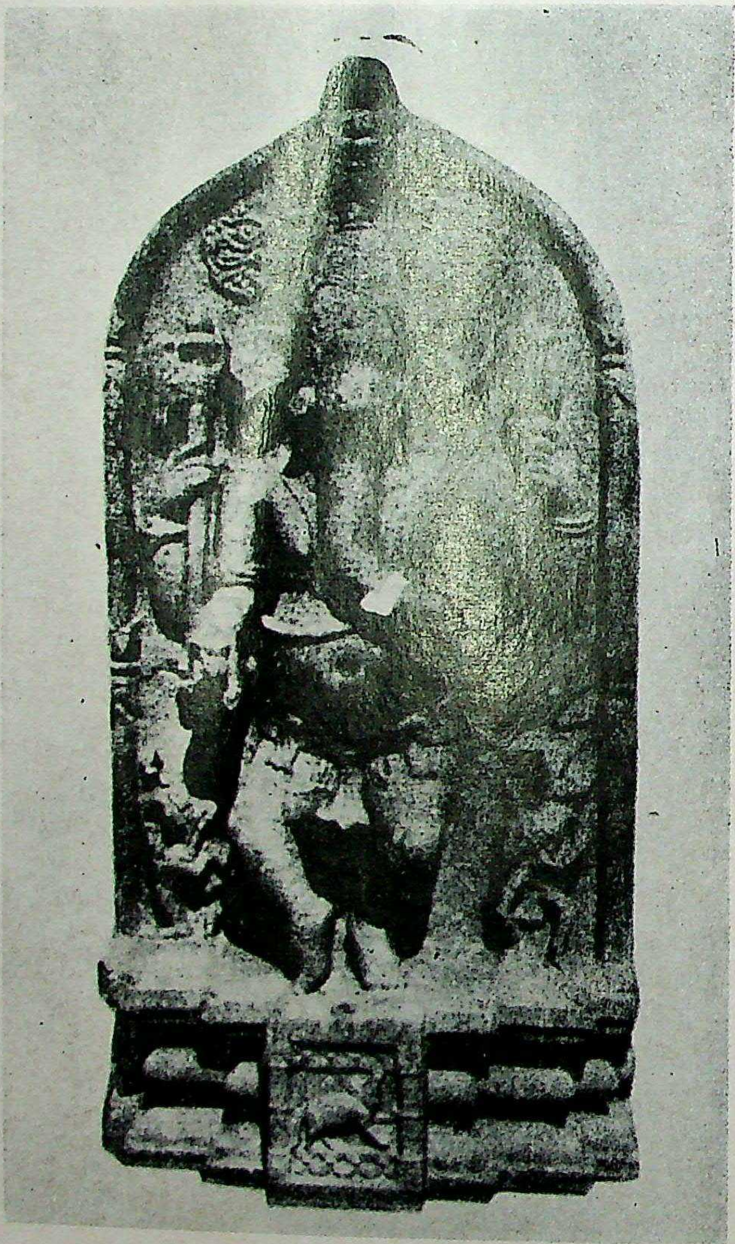

Fig. 80

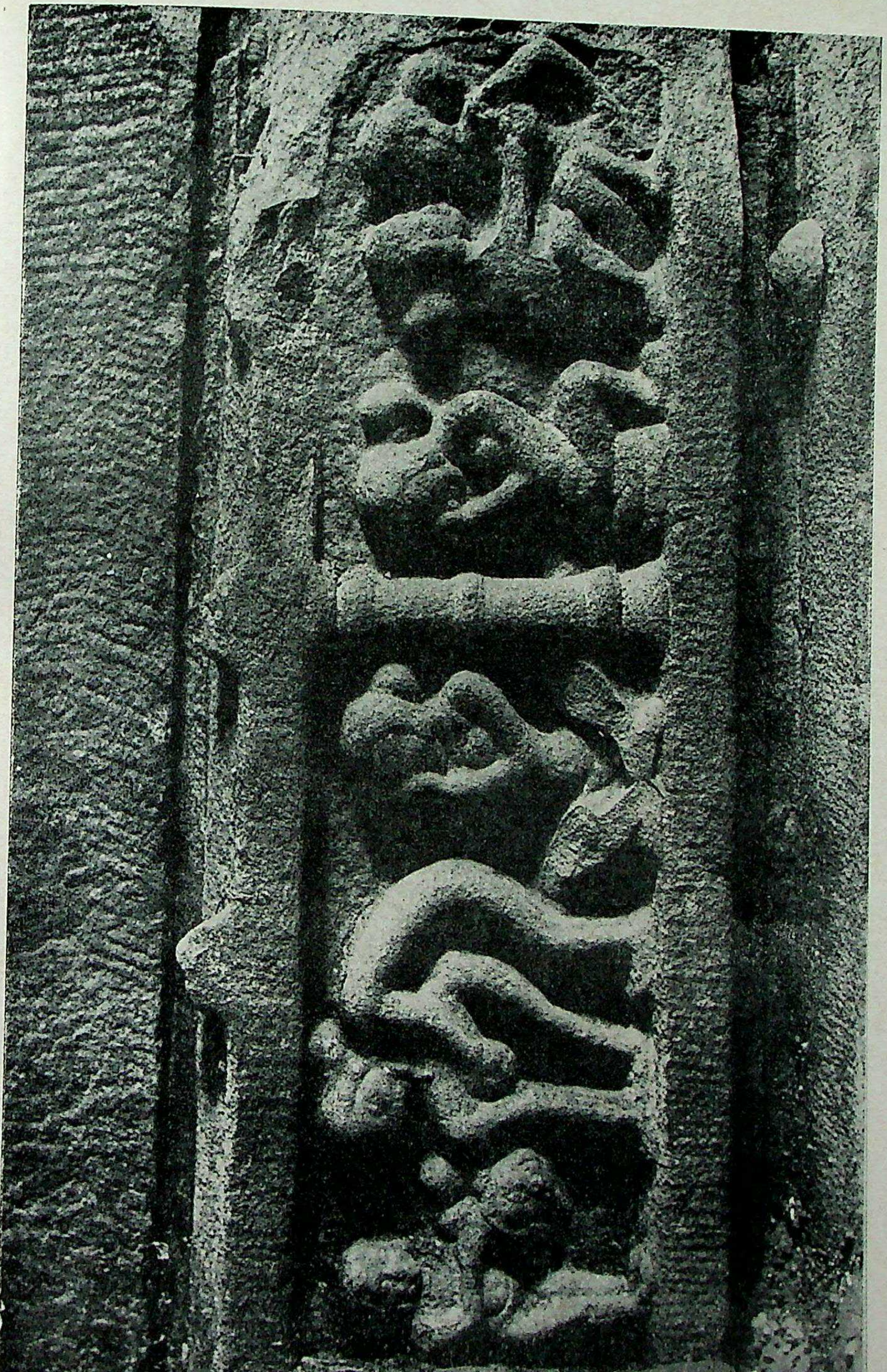

Fig. 81

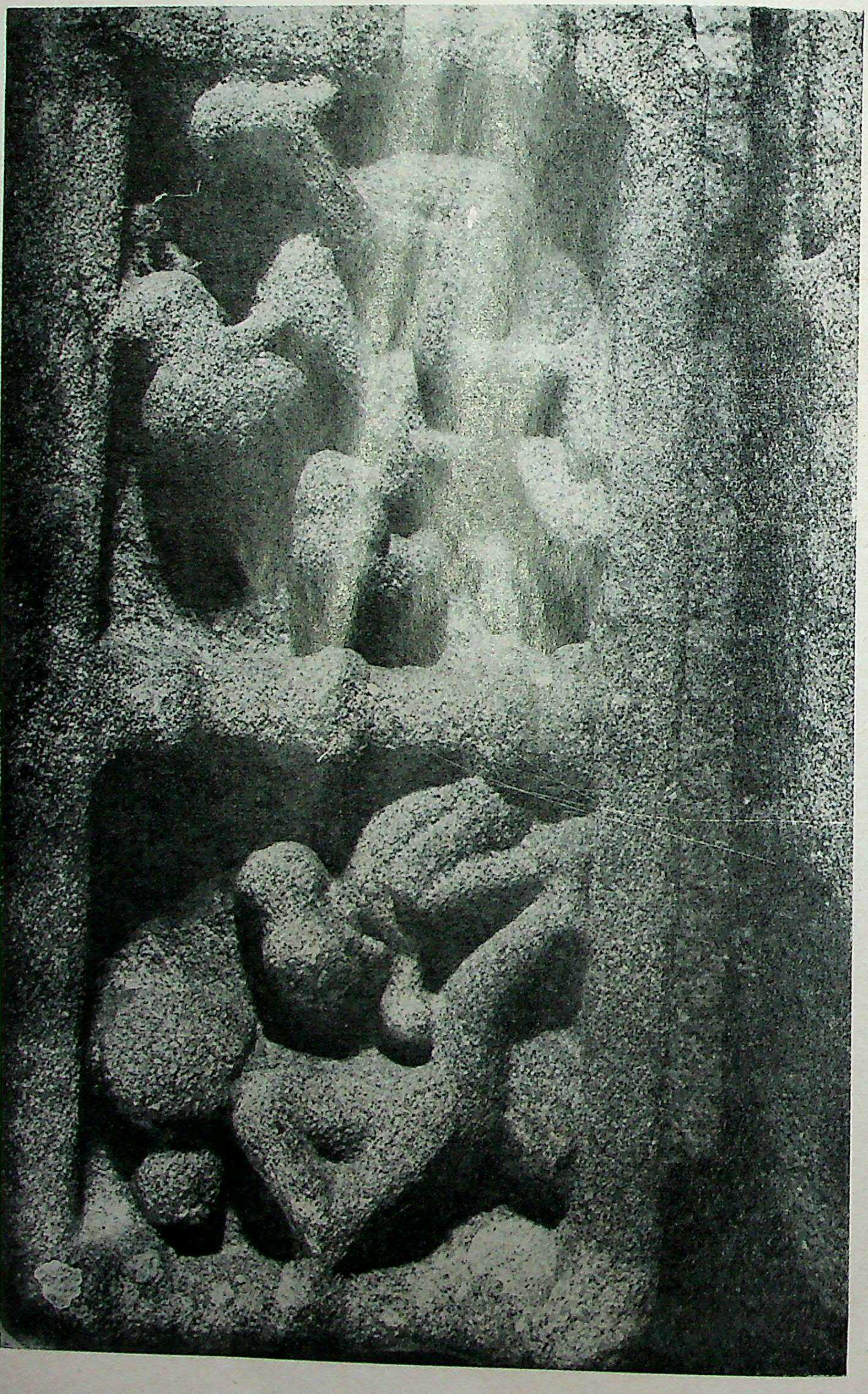

Fig. 82

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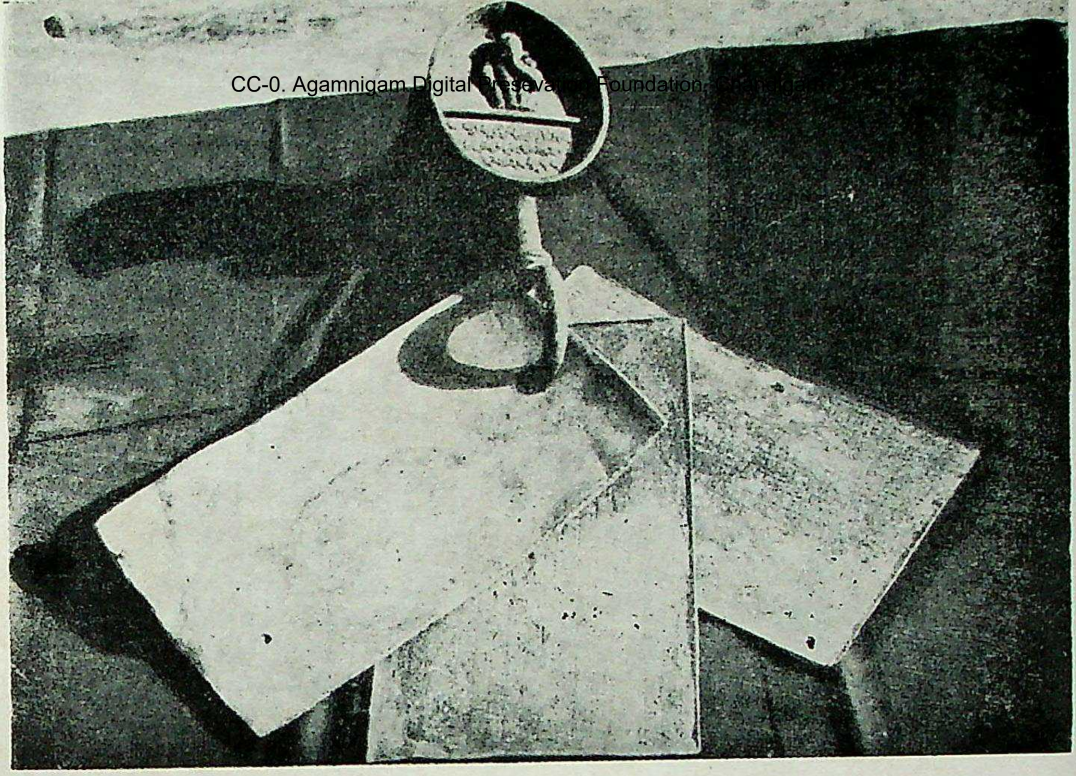

Fig. 83↑

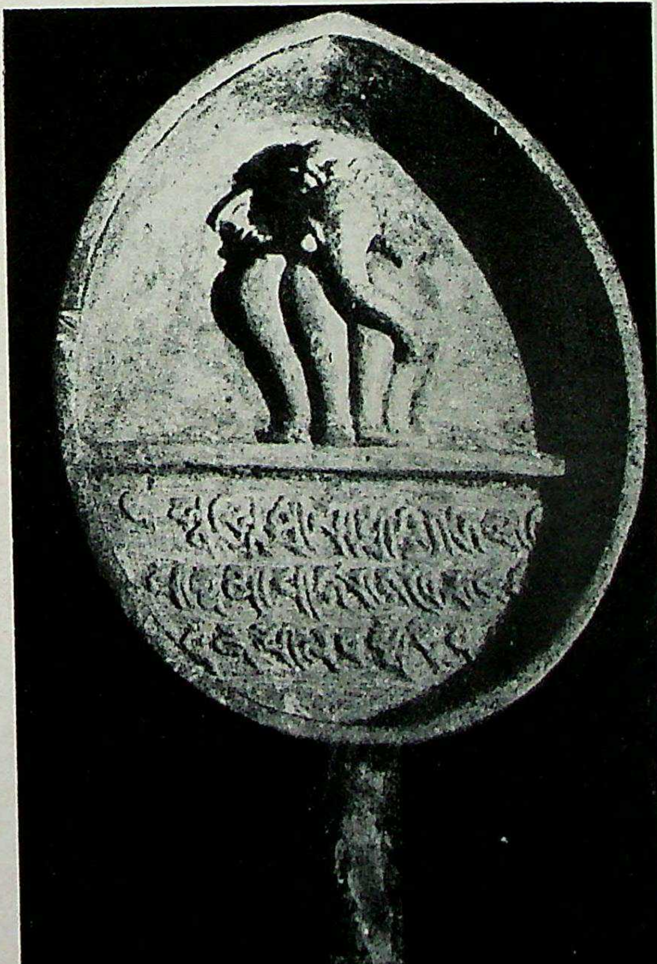

Fig. 84→

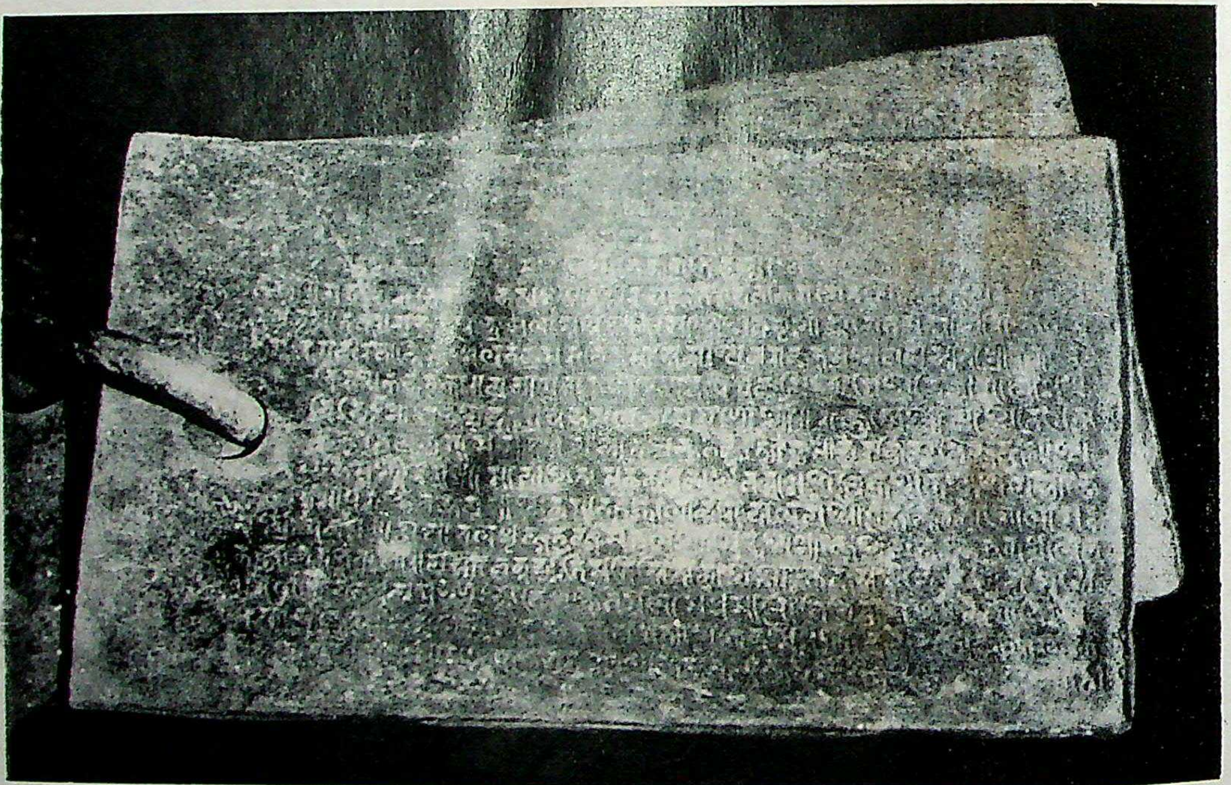

Fig. 85

Agam Kala Prakashan
DELHI